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For my dearest Husband
Christmas Day. 1884.

OCCASIONAL SERMONS

SELECTED FROM

PUBLISHED SERMONS

OF THE

REV. E. B. PUSEY

LATE CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH AND REGIUS PROFESSOR OF HEBREW

WITH A PREFACE

BY

THE REV. R. F. WILSON

VICAR OF ROWNHAMS AND CANON OF SALISBURY

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PREFACE.

'It may be proper just to advertise the reader, that he is not to look for any particular reason for the choice of the greatest part of these discourses; their having been taken from amongst many others preached through a course of years. Neither is he to expect to find any other connection between them, than that uniformity of thought and design, which will always be found in the writings of the same person, when he writes with simplicity and in earnest.'

These words of Bishop Butler at the end of the Preface to his volume of Sermons may the rather be applied to this selection from those of Dr. Pusey, because it has not been made by the writer himself, nor after consultation with him, nor does it follow in the lines of the Church's yearly teaching. The selection is miscellaneous, taken from different volumes, published at intervals of years and delivered to congregations in widely differing circumstances.

There has been, however, an attempt at some system in the selection, with a view to something of sequence and connection in the Sermons as they stand in the volumes. The idea is somewhat of this kind.

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The first three Sermons describe in some sort the habitual attitude of the Christian soul towards God. The five following describe the habitual exercise of the Christian soul as regards its inner life. Then follow loving warnings from our Lord or from the Holy Ghost, through whom He spake after His Ascension, lest we should deceive ourselves in easy self-security as to our spiritual condition. While the last three Sermons describe the spiritual life in its resulting comforts and encouragements.

A few of the Sermons have obviously no reference to this idea, and it may be noticed, that there are very few delivered before the University. It was the Editor's wish to have introduced more of them as being specially characteristic of Dr. Pusey's method, illustrating the remark of a highly intellectual and cultivated layman, that Dr. Pusey's Sermons 'stood apart by themselves from among those of all other preachers of the day;' and belonging eminently to the place and office in the Church which he filled for more than half-a-century. His opportunities of preaching officially being comparatively rare, they may also be considered to be in his judgment on subjects particularly suited to the University, whether as a school of Theology or as a place of Christian education. And his University Sermons are those on which he bestowed most labour, and to which he brought in greatest fulness the stores of his vast learning. Still, suited as they are for University Sermons, and appreciated by the crowds which thronged St. Mary's whenever Dr. Pusey occupied

the University pulpit, they are not Sermons for general readers. They are, in large portions of them, too dogmatic, critical, and controversial, requiring an amount of exact attention and knowledge beyond most readers. Then, besides their unusual length, there are notes, prefaces, and appendices to many of them, sometimes all three to the same Sermon at greater length than the Sermon itself. Thus there is one volume of ordinary thickness which contains only ten Sermons. These additions, being in order to give greater completeness to the particular Sermons, were plainly part of what he desired should be before the reader, and therefore should not be omitted.

To omit them would take from the thoroughness which is so striking a feature of his work in any subject which he took in hand. It was part of his character to spare no pains in whatever he undertook for God or for souls. This thoroughness in greater or less degree characterizes all his Sermons, whether preached before a country congregation or before the University. He desired to say all he could that might serve for the time or the occasion. Hence what he wrote requires, and well repays, frequent perusal. His Sermons should be read and re-read. They require familiar acquaintance in order to derive the full benefit of them; the rather because in addition to the copiousness of the matter, there is not unfrequently some obscurity in the style, though this prevails less in his later than in his earlier writings.

In conclusion it is not too much to say that his Sermons may be made a manual of moral and dog-

matic Theology. No one can read them attentively without perceiving that the writer is not giving out views of his own, but drawing largely from the learning and devoutness of ancient days. The faith and practice of a Christian man was in those primitive times a thing of greater cost than now both in the acquisition and in the profession of it, and therefore of necessity called for greater self-sacrifice in carrying it out. To this spirit of self-sacrifice Dr. Pusey's Sermons continually recall us, while at the same time, the love and tenderness of Almighty God in the gift of His Son, the richness and fulness and nearness of the means of Grace, and the joy and thankfulness which they inspire, so fill his heart and pervade all his thoughts, that the self-sacrifice seems as nothing in the uplifting persuasion of God's love in His personal dealings with each one of us, and the assurance of His readiness as well to forgive as to uphold, and to raise us step by step to higher degrees of holiness.

May this volume prove to many a help in these ways.

R. F. WILSON.

ROWNHAMS,
September, 1884.

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SERMON I.

FAITH.

GAL. v. 6.

'In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.'

FAITH is the foundation of the whole spiritual building, whereby we are built on Christ Jesus. It is the root of the whole spiritual life of grace, the ground whereon the soul rests securely, the beginning of our spiritual existence. Faith goes even before love, in thought, but not in deed. It goes before love, in thought; for we love because we believe, not believe because we love. Faith gives us, in this our state, the knowledge of Him Whom we love. Faith is instead of eyes. By Faith we see Him Who to our eyes of sense is unseen. We behold both backwards and forwards, and round about us, and every way we behold the love of God. And, beholding and knowing His love, we ourselves, through His gift, love. Backward, we by Faith behold God creating us, and we see our own fall; we behold His Holiness, and Goodness, and Love, forming us to love Him everlastingly; and when we had fallen, by Faith we behold Him, the Father, for us willing that God the Son should

take our fallen nature, should be born, despised, tortured, crucified, die for us. By Faith we see God the Son willing, for our sakes, to become Man. We see our dear Lord and Redeemer on the Cross, as though we were, with St. Mary Magdalene, at its foot. Faith has no past nor to come. It sees past and to come in the light of God, and is sure of them; yea, surer than of what it sees. More readily could it doubt that itself is, or that the things it sees are real. More readily could it think that all which it sees around is a dream; all things of nature, which are seen with the eyes of the body, a vain show; seeming to be, as in a dream, yet not being, than it could doubt that God IS, or IS what HE hath said HE IS. For what we see around us we know to be, by our mere powers of nature. Faith is a Divine power. They are mere bodily powers, these eyes which shall soon decay, which tell us that the things around us are. Faith is the eye of the soul, which God has given us, to behold Himself. If we trust the eye of the body in things of earth, much more must we trust the eye of the soul in the things of God. If that which is highest in us, our soul, strengthened and enlightened by God, could deceive us, much more these bodily eyes. Had we the choice (which is impossible), yet had we to believe either that this world is a mere show, just as a picture is a mere surface, without any real substance, or that God IS not, it were far easier to believe that He had set us in the midst of a vast waking dream, than that He was not the Maker of all we see, that He, Whom we love, IS not. To Faith,

then, the Crucifixion of our Lord is not (as some have coldly said) a fact which took place 1800 years ago, nor is Heaven a distant object, removed far from us, in space and time, until the end of this weary world. The Death of our Lord is to Faith the Eternal Counsel of the Ever-blessed Trinity, the unceasing Source of all spiritual blessings. Each act of His Sufferings is a part of the determinate Counsel and foreknowledge of God; each is a mystery of Love, whereon the soul shall dwell in love for ever. Faith beholds Him, because it is beheld by Him. It gazes on Him, because He has first caught and fixed its gaze. It sees, because He has given it eyes to see. Yet so it beholds Him, and He is more really present to the eyes of the soul, than all around her. To Faith which loves, things seen fade from sight, things heard fall dull upon the ear; it will be unmoved by all outward things. For it has an inward sight and an inward hearing, and an inward touch, whereby it beholds Him dying on the Cross for love of us, and hears Him pray for us, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'; and it looks on Him Whom, by our sins, we sinners pierced, and catches the look wherewith He looked on Magdalene and the thief, and clasps His feet, and in the shadow of His Cross feels itself protected and healed. Yea, Faith can enter into that Cleft of the Rock opened for us, whence gushed 'the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness,' and there it finds refuge from accusing thoughts, and the Accuser's malice. The Cross is not far off, not over the seas, in the Holy Land, nor removed by length of time. Faith sees

it close at hand, and clasps it and loves it, and is crucified on it with Him, dying to itself with its Lord, nailed to it, motionless to its own desires, dead to the world, and living to Him. Nor is Heaven far off to Faith. For where its Lord is, *there* is Heaven. Faith is with Him, present with Him in spirit, though absent in the body; a penitent amid those who, around the Throne, sing 'Holy, Holy, Holy.' Although as yet unfit to enter there, where nothing defiled can enter, there it lives and loves, in 'the [a]city of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem,' with 'an innumerable company of Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant.' There, with them, it worships Him; it beholds the glorious scars, radiant with Majesty and Love, which plead our cause with the Father, and it 'tastes[b] and sees that the Lord is good' unto all that seek Him.

Faith, in one sense, goes before love, because, unless we believed, we should have none to love. Faith is Divine knowledge. As in human love we cannot love unless we have seen, heard, or in some way known, so, without Faith, we cannot know aught of God, or know that there is a God Whom to love. Yet in act, Faith cannot be without love. '"The[c] just," says Scripture, "shall live by his faith," but by a faith which lives. A dead faith cannot give life.' Faith without love is the devils' faith. For they 'believe and tremble.' They knew Jesus, that 'He

[a] Heb. xii. 22, 23. [b] Ps. xxxiv. 8.
[c] S. Bern. de offic. Episcop. c. iv. n. 15.

was the Holy One of God.' They knew, and they owned, and they besought their Judge, 'Art Thou come to torment us before the time?' 'If Thou cast us out, suffer us to enter into the swine.'

Hearing must come before faith, for 'faith[d] cometh by hearing.' But faith cannot for an instant be separated from love. Who is the Object of Faith? God the Father, Who created us, and gave His Son to die for us; God the Son, Who became one of us, and by dying, redeemed us; God the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifieth us, and 'pours forth love,' which He is, 'abroad in our hearts.' We were as stocks and stones without faith; but He died, even 'of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.' Are we stocks or stones now, that, having faith, we *can* believe without loving? Which of His acts of boundless love should we believe without loving? Were it not enough to bear us out of ourselves for love, to transport us, to make us give up our lives for love, to carry us away out of ourselves and of all that we are, to think that for us, earth-worms and defiled, Jesus died? Does not the very name of Jesus make the heart beat, and tremble, and thrill with love? Could a criminal really believe that he had received a full pardon from his injured King, or that the King's Son had suffered to obtain his pardon, and was come to tell it him and forgive him, and not love? Well might he doubt such love. But he could not believe it and not love. Faith and love would enter his soul together. So it is with chil-

[d] Rom. x. 17.

dren, who with simple faith believe, and place no hindrance to belief and love. Tell them of their Good Father in Heaven, and they together believe in and love Him. Tell them of Jesus' love, and they together believe in and love Him. Tell them of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, that He vouchsafes to dwell in them, and they listen with wondering awe and love; they believe at once and love.

Love is in all true faith, as light and warmth are in the ray of the sun. Light and warmth are in the sun's rays, and the sun's ray brings with it light and warmth; not, light and warmth, the sun's ray: yet, where the sun's ray is, there are light and warmth, nor can that ray be any where without giving light and warmth. Even so, faith it is which brings love, not love, faith; yet faith cannot come into the heart, without bringing with it the glow of love, yea, and the light wherewith we see things Divine. So soon as faith is kindled in the heart, there is the glow of love; and both come from the same Sun of Righteousness, pouring in faith and love together into the heart, and 'there[e] is nothing hid from the heat thereof.' In winter, fewer rays come upon any spot of this land from the sun; whence there is then less brightness of light and less glow of heat than in summer; and so the surface of the earth is chilled; and though for a time the frost be melted by that fainter sun, this warmth, coming upon it only for a short time, soon passes away. Even so, there are degrees of faith and love. Yet they may

[e] Ps. xix. 6.

be real faith and love, even when the power of both is lessened, in that the soul does not keep itself or live in the full presence of God. Or, as through a closed window, more light comes than heat, so in some hearts, there may be more of knowledge than of love. And again, as on a cold misty day, when the sun is hidden from our eyes, we are so oppressed by the clamminess of the chill damp upon the surface of our bodies, and by the heavy gloom around, that we scarcely feel the presence of the light and heat; and yet the light and heat are there, else we should be in utter darkness, and our bodies would die; even so, many hearts, at many times, when some mist hides from them the Presence of their Lord, feel nothing but their own coldness and numbness, and all seems dark around them, and yet in their very inmost selves they believe and love, else their souls would be dead, and they would be 'past [f]feeling,' and they would not pine for more light and love. A dead body is in darkness, and seeth not the light of this world, and has an awful coldness to the touch; yet itself feels not its own coldness, nor knows its own darkness. Even so, the dead soul, being without the life of God, feels not its own death, craves not to love more. For He Who is Love hath left it, and it hath no power wherewith to desire to love, unless or until the Voice of Christ raises it from the dead and awakens it and it hears His Voice, and lives.

Or think on the great instances of faith in Holy Scripture. Think you not that Abraham loved, as

[f] Eph. iv, 19.

well as believed, when God first spake to him, and called him to give up his country, and his kindred, and his father's house, and instead of all, God said, 'I will bless thee,' and he took God for his All, and 'went out, not knowing whither he went,' save that he was following God? Or did not Moses love, when, taught of God, he renounced 'the wisdom of the Egyptians,' and 'refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt?' Or David, did he not love, when, in zeal for the honour of the Lord of Hosts, he went forth, a stripling, in His Name, to meet the champion of the Philistines? Or did not love with faith revive, when the royal penitent said, 'I have sinned against the Lord,' and much more, when the Lord had put away his sin, he, all life-long, said, 'My sin is ever before me'? Why did he wish to be cleansed with the atoning hyssop, even the humiliation of our Lord in His Passion? Was it not for love of God? 'Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.' So he longed to be what God would have him. What longed he for, but not to be 'cast out of God's Holy Presence[g],' or lose His Holy Spirit, His Presence, from the soul? Or in St. Peter, when both faith and love had been chilled in the night of the Lord's Passion, did they not revive by that gracious look wherewith He recalled him to Himself, and melted him into tears of penitence and love?

And of that other great penitent, St. Mary Magdalene, our Lord bears witness that in her there were

[g] Ps. li. 3, 6, 7, 11.

together love and faith; and for both together, a loving faith, or a 'faith working by love,' our Lord tells her, 'thy sins are forgiven.' Truly, she had great faith, who knew and believed the Physician of her soul, Whom the Pharisee who received Him knew not, who knew that 'the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sins,' and could read her heart, and know what she was and what she longed to be and what she came for, and would not disdain her and would accept her love, and that she might kiss His Feet, and that, when she washed them with her tears, He would wash away her sins. Truly she had great faith, who died to all that the world thought of her, and, seeing only her Redeemer, came uncalled, with such holy boldness, to Him Who had come to seek and to save that which was lost, yet had drawn her only with the cords of love, in her inmost heart. But our Lord speaks first of love, 'Her sins are forgiven her, because she loved much,' to shew us, that in all true repentance and faith there must be love; and then, having pronounced to her the forgiveness of her sins, to herself He says, 'Thy faith hath saved thee.' Faith saved her, because it brought her to Him, the Saviour. Yet had not her faith had love, she had not been forgiven, for He, the Truth, says, 'Her sins are forgiven her, *because* she loved much. And think you not, that she must have loved much, when she poured out her tears with the ointment upon His Sacred Feet? She knew Him Whom the self-righteous Pharisee knew not. She knew, far better than he, 'who or what manner

of woman' she was who touched Him; she knew far better the depth of the loathsomeness of her own sin; for she loathed it in herself. But she knew what the Pharisee knew not, Who He was Whom she touched. She knew that Holiness came from His touch to her, and that her touch could not defile Him, Who 'was Holy, harmless, separate from sinners.' Think ye not that those hot burning tears which dimmed her eyes, and washed her Saviour's Feet, were tears of burning love? Could she but love, when she kissed the Feet of God, wearied in seeking her, the lost one, and He despised not her polluted and adulterous lips, but rather 'virtue went out of Him,' to cleanse them?

Or was there not love in the faith of the penitent thief, when he discerned his Saviour by his side, in that marred Form, which 'had no beauty or comeliness,' 'His Visage was so marred more than any man, and His Form more than the sons of men,' and he said, 'Lord, remember me in Thy Kingdom.' There was humility, which owned that it deserved to be forgotten, and wondrous faith which owned in Him, 'the rejected of men,' his Lord and King and God. But there was love too. For love only craves to be remembered. It was the penitent cry of the holy Psalmist; 'Remember[h] not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Thy Mercy, remember Thou me, for Thy Goodness' sake, O Lord.' There was mighty love, and hope, and trust, which could so wrap up all its longings in that one word,

[h] Ps. xxv. 7.

'remember me.' 'Deal with me as Thou willest, so Thou remember me.' And so that inward desire He answered, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.' What would love have, but to be with Him it loves? The robber desired, not to be out of the thoughts of His Saviour. Jesus gave him more than he dared ask or think, not at some distant day, when He should come into His Kingdom, but 'To-day.' Jesus would not 'remember' him only, as far off. He would that the robber should be nigh Him. His Mother remained behind in sorrow, the Apostles in perplexity, the whole redeemed world in darkness. But to the robber Jesus saith, 'thou shalt be with Me;' '*thou* with ME;' thou, the blood-stained, with Me Who shed My Blood for love of thee and of the whole world; thou, now defiled, with Me the All-Holy; thou, the prey and sport of all evil passions and of devils, with Me, Who have bruised Satan; thou, who hast been like the beasts which perish, with ME the All-wise, All-mighty, All-good God. What a torrent of love does He pour into the penitent's heart. 'Thou with Me.' Yet the love which He had given him, called for the love which now he gives Him. The cry of humble love 'Lord, remember *me*,' 'me too, all unmeet to be remembered, Lord for Thy love's sake, remember,' called forth the words of Divine Love, 'To-day shalt thou be with ME.'

Or think you not that, when God 'opened[1] the heart of Lydia, to attend unto the things spoken by Paul,' He poured into her heart which He had opened,

[1] Acts xvi. 14, 31.

love with faith? Or when Paul said to the affrighted jailor, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house,' must not he who just before would have killed himself, have loved Him Who had brought His servant through stripes and sufferings, to teach him, how not he only, but his house might be saved from wrath, and have everlasting joy in God? Or when amid the mocking Athenians, Dionysius and Damaris and others 'clave [k] unto Paul and believed,' was there not love with faith? Love is the glue whereby hearts cleave unto God, or to His messengers and ministers for His sake Who sends them. Or when Peter bade those, pricked in the heart, because 'that same Jesus Whom they had crucified, was both Lord and Christ,' 'repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you and to your children,' think ye not that the three thousand, who 'gladly received the Word,' were full of love with faith, and that, believing, they loved?

Faith which loves not, is not faith; it is dead. And what is dead, hath ceased to be. The outward form too will soon decay and come to nothing, when life is gone. Where love is not, there is not the Holy Spirit, Who is Love, and Who 'shed abroad love in our hearts.' And without the Holy Spirit there cannot be faith, since faith is the gift of the Spirit. A dead body is a body without a soul; a dead soul is a soul without God. A 'dead faith' is a 'faith without love.'

[k] Acts xvii. 30.

A dead body is, for the time, until it wholly decays in outward form, like a living body or a body asleep; a dead faith has an outward likeness to a living faith. But as a dead body has no warmth nor power of motion, nor feeling, nor can use any of the powers it once had, nor has them any longer, it can neither taste, nor see, nor hear; so a dead faith is that which has no love, no power to do good works. It perceives not, hears not, tastes not, feels not, the things of God. Devils believe that God IS; they know against Whom they have rebelled and do rebel, Whom they hate. Devils or bad men may 'believe God,' that is, believe what God saith. The devil, though of himself he cannot foreknow it, believes that 'he[1] hath but a short time,' and therefore hath the greater 'wrath,' and puts forth the more hate. Bad men have believed, 'to-morrow we die,' and so said, 'let us eat and drink,' making this their belief the more an occasion of sin. Neither devils nor bad men can 'believe *in* God.' For 'to believe in God,' says a holy man, 'is by believing to love, by believing to go into Him, by believing to cleave unto Him and be incorporated among His Members.'

Judas believed that our Lord was the Christ, when he betrayed Him. He believed that Jesus was holy, and so repented when he saw Him condemned. But sin and the love of money had stolen away his love of God, and faith was dead. Pilate believed, so as to fear, and to regard our Lord as one, come from God, and innocent. He feared Cæsar more, and could not

[1] Rev. xii. 12.

believe *in* Jesus. The High-Priests believed that Jesus did many miracles; they could not believe *in* Him, because 'they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' Cain believed that God would punish him as He said; but, being of that wicked one, he had neither repentance, nor love, nor faith. Jeroboam and Jehu believed what God told them of themselves, and did His Word, as far as it was what they wished. Neither Jeroboam nor Jehu believed *in* God; for Jeroboam was he who caused Israel to sin, and Jehu, while he destroyed Baal out of Israel, departed not from Jeroboam's sin. For the worship of the calves favoured his worldly policy; the worshippers of Baal were Ahab's friends, and so were against himself as well as against God.

As love is the life of faith, so, with the increase of love, faith increaseth. Even from man towards man, faith and love grow together. The more we love, the more we understand and the more we trust one another. We trust, because we love, and by loving, know God. We *can* only know God, by loving Him. St. Paul says, 'I know in Whom I have believed.' Want of love is the cause of all want of faith. Did we fully love God, who could for a moment doubt of Him? Who could repine at any loss, or pain, or want, or sickness, or bereavement, if he loved God with his whole soul and heart and strength? For strong love can have no hard thoughts of God. All mistrust of God implies that He is not All-good or All-wise.

But love liveth by good works. Love cannot live

[m] S. Laur. Justinian. de Fide, c. 3.

torpid. Even in human love, love which never did deeds of love would grow chill and die. We love those most, to whom we do most good. Love is perhaps increased more by doing than by receiving good; at least, by doing good out of the love of God. Acts of love do not prove only that we have a living faith; they increase it. For to do good is to use the grace of God; and on the faithful use of grace, more grace is given. 'Faith worketh' (literally 'inworketh,' the word means, worketh in the very soul itself) 'by love.'

But it has been thought, 'if faith, on which God holds us righteous, or justifying faith, have love in it, are we not accounted righteous for something in ourselves?' We are justified, or accounted righteous before God, neither for faith nor love, but for the Merits of our Lord Jesus Christ Alone. And faith and love alike, although in us, are not of us; both are alike the gift of God. So St. Paul says, 'to you it hath been given [given, the word means, by grace[n], and as grace] in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake,' and again, 'By[o] grace ye are saved, through faith, and that [faith] not of yourselves; it [faith] is the gift of God;' even faith whereby we are accounted and made righteous before God, is not our own, lest we should think we had anything of our own; 'it' [faith] also, 'is the gift of God.' But this gift, whether of faith or love, is so given, that it is with us to receive it. We come to God by faith and love. But 'no man

[n] Philip. i. 29. [o] Eph. ii. 8.

cometh unto Me' saith our Lord, 'except the Father, Which hath sent Me, draw him.' But by both he draws us through our will, not drags us without or against it. The pleasures of sense and of the world draw us one way. God the Father and Christ draw us the other. Neither, irresistibly. 'If,' says a father [q], 'pleasure draweth, how much more may we say that a man is drawn to Christ, who is delighted by truth, delighted by blessedness, delighted by righteousness, delighted by everlasting life, all which Christ is!' 'Believe [r], and thou comest; love, and thou art drawn. Think not that it is a rough and painful violence; it is sweet, pleasant; the very sweetness draws thee.' The drawing of grace changes nature, and strengthens nature, reforms nature, subdues nature, but only if we be willing to be changed, reformed, subdued, strengthened. We are drawn with the cords of a man, not dragged as brutes. 'The drawing of grace raises upwards towards Heaven the will, inclined towards the flesh; allures it, when resisting; strengthens it, when weak; gladdens it, if saddened; gives it, when fearful, a good courage towards good.'

It was man's sin that, 'when He came unto His own, His own received Him not,' but 'to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His Name.' 'He gave them power,' which by nature they had not and could not have; here is the grace and gift of God; but, 'to as many as received Him,' here is the will of

[q] S. Aug. in Evang. Joh. c. 6. Tr. 26. n. 4.

[r] Id. Serm. ad Pop. Serm. 131. n. 2. see p. 586. Oxf. Tr.

man, although enabled and receiving power to receive Him, from God. He does not say here, 'He made them Sons of God' (although when we receive Him, He doth so make us, for none can make us the sons of God save God Himself by the Holy Spirit of adoption), but here He goes further back and says 'He gave us power.' 'He wishes,' says a father[s], 'at the same time to shew thee that not even grace cometh upon us any how, but on those who wish for it, and take pains about it.' He doth not give to us, unwilling or careless, but if we ourselves will it and consent and long for it.

How then may we know if we have this faith? How may it grow and be strengthened in us?—How do we know that our bodies live? 'As,' says a holy man[t], 'we discern the life of this body by its motion, so also the life of faith by good works. The life of the body is the soul, whereby it is moved and feels; the life of faith is love; because by it, it worketh, as thou readest in the Apostle, 'Faith which worketh by love.' Whence also when charity waxeth cold, faith dies; as the body, when the soul departeth. If then thou see a man, earnest in good works, and gladly fervent in conversation, doubt not that faith lives in him. Thou hast undoubted proofs of its life.'

Wouldest thou again that thy faith should grow and be strengthened in thee? 'If thou art not drawn,' says a father[u], 'pray that thou mayest be drawn.'

[s] S. Chrys. Hom. x. n. 2. in S. Joh. i. 12. p. 84. Oxf. Tr.
[t] S. Bern. in Temp. Res. Serm. 2. n. 1. p. 906.
[u] S. Aug. in S. John, l. c. n. 2.

If thou canst not pray fervently, pray for the spirit of prayer and supplication, and 'the Spirit Himself shall help thine infirmities and make intercession for thee, according to the Will of God.' Heed not, if thou seem not at first to be heard. Remember the Syrophenician woman, and take courage. He Who seemed to neglect her, inwardly drew her to persevere, and then crowned her perseverance by the words of blessing, 'O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.'

Act faithfully, according to thy degree of light and what God giveth thee to see; and thou shalt see more clearly. Hearken to the low whispers of His Voice within thee, and thou shalt hear more distinctly. Above all, do not stifle any motions of conscience; for this were to deaden faith.

If thou art in doubt how to act, set the Day of Judgment before thee, and act now as thou wouldest then wish that thou hadst acted. It sorely injures faith, to act, suspecting that thou art acting amiss. For it is the part of Faith to act, without seeing, in all which it dimly hopes to be according to the Will of God.

Wean thyself from pleasure of sense, if thou wouldest have strong faith. Moses despised the pleasures of a king's court, and so became 'a man of God,' 'faithful in all his house,' through faith; the children of Israel lusted after 'the leeks and onions and flesh-pots of Egypt,' rebelled against God and lost the promised land.

Be not taken up with an earthly future, if thou

wouldest look beyond the veil, and 'behold Him Who is Invisible.'

Be not anxious about little things, if thou wouldest learn to trust God with thine all. Act upon faith in little things; commit thy daily cares and anxieties to Him, and He will strengthen thy faith for any greater trials. Rather, give thy whole self into God's Hands, and so trust Him to take care of thee in all lesser things, as being His, for His Own Sake, Whose thou art.

Meditate daily on the things of Eternity, and, by the grace of God, do something daily, which thou wouldest wish to have done, when that day cometh. Eternity fades quickly from sight, amid the mists and clouds of this world. Heaven is above our heads, yet we see it not with eyes fixed on the earth.

Especially, in any temptation of Satan, call quickly to mind Whose thou art, in Whom thou hast believed. 'Whom resist,' says St. Peter, 'steadfast in the faith.' 'Taking,' says St. Paul, 'the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil.'

Above all things, *in* all things, 'look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of thy faith.' Do things through His grace, for Him, looking to Him as thy everlasting Great Reward. Let nothing keep thee back from Him. If thou failest, look to Him to uphold thee; if thou stumblest, hold swift His Hand to keep thee; if thou fallest, lie not hopelessly there, but look to Him to raise thee; if by His grace thou doest well, look to Him in thanksgiving, that He has helped thee, and

pray that thou mayest do better. Mourn to Him, for love of Him, that thou ever offendedst Him ; mourn to Him all thy offences, one by one, against Him; but pray Him that for love of Him thou mayest no more offend Him.

Do deeds of love for Him, to Him, following His steps. 'The severing of love,' says a holy man [x], 'is the death of faith. Believest thou in Christ? Do the works of Christ, that thy faith may live. Let love give life to thy faith, works prove it. Let not earthly deeds bow down, whom faith of heavenly things raises up. Thou who sayest thou abidest in Christ, oughtest so to walk as He walked. If thou seekest thine own glory, enviest the prosperous, speakest ill of the absent, renderest evil to him who injureth thee, this did not Christ.

'Thou confessest that thou lovest God, but in deeds thou deniest Him. Thou hast given thy tongue to Christ, thy soul to the devil. Thou canst not lift up the head, bowed down by the yoke of the devil. Thou canst not raise thyself, when thine iniquities go over thy head, a heavy burden, too heavy for thee. Even a right faith, if it work not by love, maketh not men upright. Nor can works, although right, make the heart upright, without faith. For 'without faith it is impossible to please God.' Whoso pleaseth not God, God cannot please him. For whom God pleaseth, he cannot displease God. If then neither faith without works, nor works without faith, suffice to make the heart upright, let us, who believe in Christ, labour

[x] S. Bern. Serm. 24. in Cant. n. 8.

to make our ways and our deeds upright. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God, then we may be formed wholly upright, proving by right deeds the rightness of our faith, loving and loved by the Bridegroom of the Church, Jesus Christ our Lord, God Blessed for evermore. Amen.'

SERMON II.

PATIENCE.

1 St. Peter ii. 22.

'Even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.'

Patience is the endurance of any evil, out of the love of God, as the will of God. There is nothing too little, in which, without God, we should not fail; nothing too great, which, with the help of God, we may not endure. The offices of patience are as varied as the ills of this life. We have need of it with ourselves and with others; with those below and those above us, and with our own equals; with those who love us, and those who love us not; for the greatest things and for the least; against sudden inroads of trouble, and under our daily burdens; disappointments as to the weather or the breaking of the heart; in the weariness of the body, or the wearing of the soul; in our own failure of duty, or others' failure towards us; in every-day wants, or in the aching of sickness or the decay of age; in disappointment, bereavement, losses, injuries, reproaches; in heaviness of the heart, or its sickness amid delayed hopes, or the weight of this body of

death, from which we would be free, that we might have no more struggle with sin within, or temptation without, but attain to our blessed and everlasting peace in our rest in God. In all these things, from childhood's little troubles to the martyr's sufferings, patience is the grace of God, whereby we endure evil for the love of God, and keep ourselves still and motionless, that we offend not God.

All other virtues and graces have need of patience to perfect or to secure them. Patience interposes herself and receives and stops every dart which the evil one aims at them. 'Patience[a] is the root and guardian of all virtue;' impatience is the enemy of all. Impatience disquiets the soul, makes her weary of conflict, ready to lay aside her armour and to leave difficult duty. Impatience, by troubling the smooth mirror of the soul, hinders her from reflecting the Face of God; by its din, it hinders her from hearing the voice of God. It makes the soul outrun, or fall short of, the will of God. Impatience listens to nothing, heeds nothing, fears nothing, hopes nothing, judges aright of nothing, perseveres in nothing except in restlessness. Impatience is a burden to itself, distrusts man, rebels against God. It shakes every virtue, and enters into almost every sin. It casts aside every remedy for itself or for any other fault. Impatience made Cain a murderer, and Absalom a parricide[b], and Judas a Deicide. Impatience, not waiting for God, turns even goods into evils. Jeroboam waited not for the goods which God had promised him; he

[a] S. Greg. Hom. 35. in Evang.

[b] 2 Sam. xvii. 1–4.

forfeited them, destroyed his own house which he wished to raise, and left of his ambition no memorial save that it was he 'who[c] did sin and who made Israel to sin.'

The sins of the Jews in the wilderness, (our ensamples,) whence sprang they, but from impatience of hunger and thirst, or of the sameness of the food God gave them, or of Moses delaying in the Mount, when they 'made gods to go before them into Egypt,' whence God had redeemed them? It might seem a natural thing, that impatience should be the groundwork of anger; but strange it is, that even deadly indulgence in miserable pleasure should be the fruit of impatience.

How does it shake faith to be impatient of evils, either in the world, or in the Church, or those which befall a person's own self! How does impatience with others' defects chill love, or impatience with even our own failings and shortcomings extinguish hope! To be impatient at blame is a blight to humility; at contradiction, destroys meekness; at injuries, quenches longsuffering; at sharp words, mars gentleness; at having one's own will crossed, obedience. Impatience at doing the same things again and again, hinders perseverance; impatience of bodily wants surprises people into intemperance, or leads them to deceive, lie, steal.

'In patience,' our Blessed Lord tells us, 'possess ye your souls.' By patience, we have the keeping of our own souls; we command ourselves, and our passions are subdued to us; and 'commanding[d] ourselves, we

[c] 1 Kings xiv. 16. [d] S. Greg. l. c.

begin to possess that which we are.' What is to possess a thing, but to have entire command over it, that we may do with it what we will? What, then, is it to 'possess the soul,' but to be lord over all its powers, motions, emotions, and, by the grace of God, to control and direct them, according to the will of God? Whence even the world calls a man 'self-possessed,' who cannot be thrown off his guard, but, gathered up within himself and immovable, has a clear, steady command of all the powers of his mind. He is spiritually 'self-possessed,' who, by the grace of God, so keeps himself, that 'no [e] vehemence of delight masters him, no tribulation wears him out, no sudden temptation carries him away, no unworthy affection draws him down from God.'

Patience, then, is the guardian of faith, the fence of love, the strength of hope, the parent of peace. Patience protects humility, keeps meekness, is the soul of longsuffering, guides gentleness, strengthens perseverance. Patience 'bridleth [f] the tongue, restraineth the hand, ruleth the flesh, preserveth the spirit, tramples on temptations, drives away offences; breaks the force of passion, calms the violence of pride, quenches the fire of variance,' bids, in its Lord's Name, wind and storm 'be still; and there is a great calm.'

Patience makes the soul to be of one mind with God, and sweetens all the ills of life. It casts the light of Heaven upon them, and transforms them into

[e] Paradise of the Christian Soul, P. iv. p. 61.

[f] See Tert. on Patience, c. xv. p. 346. Oxf. Tr. S. Cyprian on Patience, § 14. p. 262. Oxf. Tr.

goods. It makes the bitter waters sweet; the barren and dry land fruitful. Desolation it makes a loneliness with God; the parching of sickness to be the fire of His love; weakness to be His strength; wounds to be health; emptiness of all things, to have all things from Him; poverty to be true riches; His deserved punishments to be His rainbow of mercy; death to be His Life.

Great must be the blessing of evil, since it is so widely spread in the works of a good God. Deep must the blessing of evil be, since God vouchsafed it so largely to those whom He made most like to His own Son in the flesh. Very necessary must evil be to us, since none, fence themselves as they may from it, can escape it. None *do*, in any great measure, escape it, save those who, resisting God, are at length abandoned by God, and, forsaking Him and forsaken by Him, are left unvisited by Him in His Mercy, until they have treasured up His wrath to the uttermost. So strongly is this stamped upon our fallen nature, that even the heathen[g] felt that unmingled prosperity

[g] 'I wish both for myself and for those for whom I care, that sometimes we may succeed, sometimes fail, and so pass through life, rather than succeed in all things. For never did I hear of any one, who succeeded in all things, and did not at last end ill, utterly perishing.' Amasis to Polycrates in Herod. iii. 40. See iii. 41—43. 125. and of Crœsus i. 34. 'M. Furius Camillus is said to have prayed, that if his own fortune and that of the Roman people seemed to any of the gods or men too great, he might abate this displeasure by his own private trouble rather than by the least public evil of the Roman people.' Liv. v. 21. 'Q. Fabius Max. said that he feared fortune itself, lest it should seem to any of the gods, to have been too great towards him, and more constant than was consistent with the things of man.' Ib. x. 23. See further Valck. ad Herod. iii. 40.

was the herald of woe to come. Absence of chastisement or trial, the fulness of the world's prosperity, are the worst outward tokens of man's salvation. Blow upon blow, and wound upon wound, are signs of His Mercy.

Blessed are ye then, my poorer brethren, if ye know your own blessedness, that God has allotted to you a larger portion of the hardships of this life. Far easier and safer and humbler is your lot, to endure the daily trials of this life, than for us to find out self-denial for ourselves. In this too, 'blessed are' ye 'poor, for yours is the kingdom of Heaven.' A ready road and straight path have ye to Heaven, if, for the love of God, ye endure patiently the ills which God appoints you, if ye bless Him in them and for them, and let not yourselves be turned to the right hand or to the left, nor seek to remove them by doing what will displease God.

Blessed indeed must patient suffering be, since it was the portion of the Son of God. 'Even hereunto,' to suffer patiently, 'were ye called,' because 'Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps.' How must not that be the way of salvation, which He, the Saviour, trod and endured for us? how not hallowing to us, which He has hallowed for us, by undergoing it? how should it not be the path to Heaven, which He has tracked for us with His own Blood? Glorious is it for the soldier, to bear the ensigns of the Captain of his salvation. Glorious for the Christian to bear the marks of his Lord. What more blessed for the bride,

than to be likened to the Bridegroom? what for the members than to be likened to the Thorn-crowned Head? His sufferings have even now passed anew before our eyes. All the Sufferings of His Life were gathered before us in His Death. What of bodily suffering was missing, when every spot in His holy tender frame was rent with scourges, when limb was disjointed from limb[h], every sense racked with agony, when from the thorn-encompassed Head, in unrest upon the hard Cross, to the pierced Feet, all was 'wounds and bruises and putrifying sores?' What suffering was spared, when the ears were sated with blasphemies, the heart betrayed, denied, forsaken; the Soul seemed to be forsaken of the Father; and the consolations of the Divine Nature, wherewith It was united, were denied to It? What when man disowned his Redeemer, and accused the Holy One as blaspheming Him Whose Will He came to do; and the Father, for the time, owned Him not? And now how is it? The scars of His nailed Hands and wounded Feet, and pierced Side remain, but in what glory! He rose again, a spiritual Body, yet with the tokens of His Passion. Then He showed Himself to His Disciples, to be seen, touched, felt. With that same Body, He ascended into Heaven. In that same Body, He there 'liveth to make intercession for us.' These glorious Wounds, received for us, plead for us with the Father night and day, to turn away His wrath from us. And how? The beloved Disciple saw Him as man *could* see Him, all-radiant with

[h] Ps. xxii. 14.

glory, and 'fell[1] at His feet, as dead.' There in the brightness of the Godhead, streaming with the unspeakable glory of the Godhead, transparent, radiant, brilliant, beaming above the piercing dazzling rays of the sun, are those Ever-blessed Wounds, the memorials of His Passion, the ensigns of His Victory. Brighter are they than all created brightness; for their brightness is the glory of the love of God. Such is the reward of Suffering; such the pattern which ye, in your measure, are to follow; such is the image to which we are to be conformed, of patient suffering here, and everlasting reward; for 'if we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together.'

But how, ye will say, can we be made like unto Jesus? how can our poor irksome sufferings, of cold or hunger, or poor fare, or aching of limbs, or stiffness of our joints, or sleeplessness, or weariness, how can they be hallowed to us, how can they be borne, so as to make us like our Lord? First, many of these sufferings our good Lord took, in order to hallow them for us, to give them a worth and a joy, painful as they are, because they were His. Was He not weary by the well, and a hungred after His temptation, and were not His Knees stiffened on the Cross, and His limbs out of joint? Was He not chilled with the dew of Heaven, as He passed whole nights on the mountain or in the garden in prayer for us? and was not He, Who feeds all creation, fed by the barley-loaves, the gift of His creatures to His poverty?

But then, how did He hallow them? By enduring

[1] Rev. i. 17.

them as the will of God. 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.' He 'became obedient unto death, and that the death of the Cross.'

And so for us. It is matter of faith, that everything, what seems to us the greatest and the least, is ordained or overruled by God. What is good He gives; what is evil He overrules to the good of His own. To God, nothing can be great; as to us, nothing is little, which in any way affects our souls. To God, the fall of empires, the crash of the world, the dissolving of the whole universe, were as nothing. By His Word were they created; at His breath they would pass away. More precious to Him than the whole world is the value of one single soul. For the world shall perish, the soul endureth. The world and all its wondrous beauty is but the work of His Hands; the soul, made and remade in the Image of God, was redeemed by the Blood of Christ. It were more reasonable to think that God had not made man at all, than to think that He had set him in the midst of this His creation, and left him the mere sport of chance, or of rude unbending laws, and did not order every, the least, thing concerning him for the well-being of his soul. We often think of God as too like ourselves. To us, it is a trouble and weariness, to look into little things, to attend particularly to this or that. And so men picture to themselves Almighty God, as having made certain great laws of our world; but they cannot bring home to themselves, that every, the very least, accident of every day is known, willed, overruled, by Almighty

God. If they ventured to put their thoughts into words, they would think it a trouble to Almighty God to attend to all the little details of our daily life. As though God were like ourselves, beholding with effort things one by one, giving His Mind (so to say) now to one thing, now to another, or, as though, having set this world in motion like a great machine, He put it in His own stead, to govern itself, and did not weary Himself about it! Rather, Almighty God, not being divided and not having parts and a bounded mind, as we, sees all at once, past, present, and to come; all things which to us have been, or are, or shall be, or all things which could be; all things which He has made, or all which, if He willed, He could make; all which He shall make, and the whole history of every creature of His, spread out before Him, as in the mirror of His Infinite Mind, present there. Unchanging, He changeth all things; in perfect rest, He ordereth all things. By His will He made them; by His will He upholds all which is upheld, and leaves to decay whatever decays. Everything, at every moment of time, is seen in the perfect stillness of His Infinite Mind, and is ruled and overruled by His Infinite Will. He so 'upholdeth all things by the Word of His Power,' that our Lord saith, 'Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without My Father;' 'The hairs of your head are all numbered.'

Our Lord teaches us as to those very little things, in order that we may know and feel, that nothing is too little to be ordered by our Father, nothing too little in

which to see His Hand, nothing, which touches our souls, too little to accept from Him, nothing too little to be done to Him. Since the hairs of our head are all numbered, so is every throb or shoot of pain, every beating or aching of the heart. Every tear which starts is seen, and, if wept to Him, is gathered up by Him. Every secret sigh He hears at once from every bosom in His whole creation. Every secret wish or prayer He hears, while yet unuttered or performed. He Who is in the highest Heaven, and filleth all things, but is contained by none; He is present to each single heart, and hears; and, if the heart form its wish to Him, He hearkens.

This then is the first great ground of patience, that God is our Father, All-wise, All-loving, All-good; that 'He[k] knows and wills and can what is best for our souls,' while 'we, poor beings, neither know, nor can, nor, as we ought, will it.' He knows not only every illness which in His Good Providence He sends, but every ache or pain of it. He knows our every want in every day, and whether we shall look to Him in it, or no. He knows every cross which befalls us; how piercing every wind is; how it threatens your future harvest[l]. Every blade of your corn which it nips is as clearly before His eyes, as if in the whole universe there were nothing besides. He Who 'breaks the ships of Tarshish with the east wind,' and sendeth rain upon the earth or withholdeth it, 'causeth[m] it to rain,' He saith Himself, 'on one field, and not on

[k] Bishop Andrewes.

[l] Preached in a village, in a parching spring.

[m] Amos iv. 7.

another,' giveth it in one year or month, and withholdeth it in another; and that, to correct us, humble us, teach us our dependence upon Him.

This is a faith, such as the heathen might have had, and, in some measure, had. 'God[n],' St. Paul says, 'had not left Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from Heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.' The heathen, in a way, prayed or looked to God for rain and for their needs; and He, the Father of all, gave it to them.

But further; not only His gifts in nature, but the hearts of men; not only the ills in nature, but the evil wills of man, are in His Hands. 'Wind and storm fulfil His Word,' even when they lay waste the face of His own world. Mankind and each several human being, with all their sins, waywardnesses, negligences, ignorances, work out, through their own ungoverned wills, exactly that measure of trial which Almighty God, in His Infinite Wisdom, knew to be best, for the perfecting of those who love Him, or for the chastening of those who may be turned to love Him. God wills not the wickedness of the wicked. But, while they, by their sinfulness, bring on themselves destruction, their very sins are to the good the occasion of good. God, being good, makes men's evil, against their will, work to the good of His Own. God willed not the hatred of Cain, nor the grudge of Esau, nor the oppression of Pharaoh, nor Saul's bloodthirsty following of David, nor the curses of Shimei.

[n] Acts xiv. 17.

Yet they, through what was against God's will, were to Abel and to Jacob, to all Israel and to David the instruments of the holy will of God. The Chaldeans who fell on Job's flocks and herds, thought only of their own booty. In God's Hands their evil will proved and made glorious the patience of Job, as much as the wind of the desert, which smote the corners of the house where his sons were. The Assyrian thought only of his own might and greatness; the Prophet tells us that he was 'the rod of God's anger.' The envy of the Chief Priests, the treachery of Judas, the fickleness of the poorer Jews, and their fear of the Romans, the cowardice of Pilate out of an evil conscience, accomplished only that 'which God's counsel had determined before to be done.' Judas' accursed kiss was the fruit of his disappointed covetousness and hypocrisy; the very money which he received, and his own base act fulfilled prophecy and wrought out the will of God. Evil men are not the less evil, they are the more evil, because God is good; but God is so good that they can do no real evil; their evil but works to good to those who love God. St. Paul, when he persecuted the name of Christ and took part in the death of St. Stephen, against God's will, fulfilled His will; when converted, he fulfilled more blessedly the will of God by doing it. The whole noble army of martyrs have been enrolled, one by one, through the cruelty of men who hated God and slew them.

And so now too. God willeth not the wickedness or death of the sinners; but no sinners can harm the good. Nothing can harm us, while, by the grace of

God, our own will stands firm to serve God. God willeth not that man should be angry, revengeful, slanderous; but He wills, (if so be,) that our tempers should be proved by angry words, our patience by the slanderous tongue.

This then is of faith, that everything, the very least, or what seems to us great—every change of the seasons, everything which touches us in mind, body, or estate, whether brought about through this outward senseless nature, or by the will of man, good or bad—is overruled to each of us by the All-holy and All-loving will of God. This is the first lesson of patience, that whatever befalls us, however it befalls us, we must receive as the will of God. If it befalls us through man's negligence or ill-will, or anger, still it is, in every the least circumstance, to *us* the will of God. For if the least thing could happen to us without God's permission, it would be something out of God's control. God's Providence or His Love would not be what they are. Almighty God Himself would not be the same God; not the God Whom we believe, adore, and love.

But since whatsoever befalls us of suffering or ill is, however it comes, the will of God to us, what then should we do when it comes? Surely forget, as far as we may, all besides, and go up in thought to the Eternal Throne, and behold in mind the Heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the Right Hand of God, thence looking down upon us, allotting to us our trials, even through the wrong tempers of men; thence pouring down His strength to us, if we will, to

bear them; thence looking to us graciously, if we bear them, through His grace, aright; thence preparing us for the place in Heaven which He ascended on high to prepare for us. O how do all the ills of life fade into nothing; how glad may any trial be, though painful to flesh and blood; how should we greet as goods the evils of life; how would its sadness become gladness, its thorns a crown, if we but see in them the Eternal Hand of God, moulding us by them for everlasting glory; refining away, through outward ills, our own inward evils; chastening us, that we might not perish; checking us, that we might not go astray; recalling us, when astray; alluring us by His Goodness; and then again, weaning us from this world by its very unrest and suffering, that in Him we might find everlasting rest and peace.

A firm faith knows that whatever befalls it from without, will, if by God's grace it perseveres, turn to its everlasting good. 'There should be no greater comfort to Christian persons,' our Church teaches when we are sick, 'than to be made like unto Christ, by suffering patiently adversities, troubles and sicknesses. For He Himself went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain; He entered not into His Glory before He was crucified. So truly our way to eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ; and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with Christ, that we may rise again from death, and dwell with Him in everlasting life.'

To this faith, the stepping-stone is humility. Faith tells us that all which befalls us, is the will of God.

A humble faith knows, that if it is good, it is of God's goodness, not of our desert; if evil, it is less than we deserve. There was no evil in Paradise. Death, sickness, pain of body and soul, came to us by sin. We are sinners, sick in soul, more or less, whether we know our sickness or no. They know their sickness best, who are least sick. It is the worst sickness, not to know that we are sick. St. John, whom Jesus loved, says, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.' Life is one long sickness, in which those of us who are using God's grace, are regaining our health, until the time come, when He Who 'forgiveth all our sin,' shall 'heal all our infirmities, and crown us with mercy and loving-kindness.'

Meanwhile, every evil is, in God's purpose, a medicine to our soul, bitter, painful, but full of everlasting health. If we have a mortal disease of the body, we bear, if we are wise, the knife which severs a limb, that the whole body may live; we take readily what is nauseous, endure what is hard, abstain from our food, if we indeed believe that it is for the life of this body. Even so, if we are wise, we should receive every ill of life, not as God's will only, but as the wise and loving will of God, the tender Physician of our souls, Who gives us no one pain which is not, in His Hands, a means to everlasting joy.

'No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.' Every, the least, trial has its own weight. It is our wisdom and humility to own this. Were it not so, people would not bear petty trials so

ill. It is not lack of patience to feel an ill, nor to be oppressed by it, nor to be 'heavy and exceeding sorrowful under it.' Our loving Lord sanctified such human feelings by the heaviness which, in the garden, He allowed to come over His Soul. Impatience is not, to feel the weight of suffering, but to attempt to throw it off; not, to be bowed down, but to rebel; not, to be cut to the heart with anguish, nor to writhe in agony, but not 'out of the deep, to call upon God.' Impatience is not, mutely to shrink from suffering, but to toss feverishly, forgetting God. The heart may, and must, rise and sink; we can, by God's grace, control it, hold it down, keep it outwardly still, hinder it from having any wrong vent; we cannot hush its beatings. Hard words *will* vex; unkindness *will* pierce; neglect *will* wound; threatened evils *will* make the soul quiver; sharp pain or weariness *will* rack the body, or make it restless; cold *will* fret the frame; hunger *will* gnaw it. But what says the Psalmist? 'When my heart is vexed, I will complain.' To whom? Not *of* God, but *to* God.

As thou learnest this lesson, to carry all thy sorrows to God, and lie at thy Saviour's Feet, and spread thy grief before Him, thou wilt find a calm come over thee, thou knowest not whence; thou wilt see, through the clouds, a bright opening, small perhaps and quickly closed, but telling of eternal rest, and everlasting day, and of the depth of the Love of God; thou wilt forget the darkness of the cloud, in the rich beauty of His all-encompassing Bow, the witness of His enduring love and of His unwillingness to punish,

which, without the cloud, thou couldest not see. Thy heart will still rise and sink; but it will rise and sink, not restlessly nor waywardly, not in violent gusts of passion; but, whether rising or sinking, amid all outward heavings of this world's waves, resting in stillness on the bosom of the ocean of the Love of God.

Then wilt thou know for thyself, that 'God is nothing but good' to thee; that chastisements are but an austere form of His Love. Thou wilt find for thyself, that tribulation, by the grace of God, opens thine eyes to thine own defects, and to the love of God; softens thine heart; cleanses thy soul; guards thee from resting in the things of this life, and taking up with thy portion here; rouses thee from carelessness; keeps thee humble, even when thou succeedest well with thyself; teaches thee to mistrust thyself, and trust wholly in God, thy everlasting strength.

Then shalt thou learn, not to endure only patiently whatever shall befal thee against thy will, but humbly and quickly to see and to love therein the loving Will of God. Thy faith and thy love and thy hope will grow, the more thou seest the work of God with thee; thou wilt joy in thy sorrow, and thy sorrow will be turned into joy. It will be a joy to thee, to be likened in suffering to thy Lord, even though it be like the dying robber at His Side. 'Thou,' says a holy man [o], 'O Lord Jesu, art both to me, the Mirror of suffering, and the Reward of the sufferer. Each strongly urges me on, and mightily kindles me. Thou teachest my hands to fight, by the example of Thy virtue;

[o] S. Bern. in Cant. Serm. 47. § 6.

Thou, after victory, crownest my head with the Presence of Thy Majesty. Whether I look on Thee fighting, or look for Thee, not crowning only but the Crown, both ways Thou allurest me wondrously. Both ways art Thou a most mighty cord to draw me. Draw me after Thee; gladly do I follow Thee; more gladly to enjoy Thee. If thou art so good to those who follow Thee, what to those who attain Thee!'

SERMON III.

Feast of the Circumcision.

JOY OUT OF SUFFERING.

Job xiii. 15.

'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'

The world begins this day with glad greetings, and words of hope, and preparations of joy, and undefined looking and longing for future excitement and greater joy in store. Its Saviour begins it with suffering and humiliation, the first shedding of His redeeming Blood, foredating Its full outpouring on Calvary, and His humbling Himself to the Death of the Cross. Born under the law, to redeem us from the curse of the law, He not only fulfilled it as One Righteous, but in the seeming of a sinner. Awful words they are to speak. Yet the humiliation of the Circumcision is, in one way, greater than the humiliation of the Cross, in that the Cross seemed laid upon Him by the malice and envy of sinful men, and even Pilate knew that 'the Chief Priests for envy had delivered Him[a]'; the Circumcision was laid upon Him directly by the Father.

[a] S. Matt. xxvii. 18.

At the Cross, dumb nature bore witness to His Majesty in His Humility; 'the very stones cried out.' His timid, unjust judge, unknowing, even on the Cross, confessed His Kingly title. He who, in the judgment-hall, had said to Him—'Art Thou a king then?[b]' himself placed on His Cross, in three languages, His Name of King, acknowledging His universal sway, and confessed in action, what had been foretold in words, that He should 'reign through death.' Earth and Heaven, sin and death, owned Him as their Lord, when crucified. The sun shrank from beholding its Creator's Death; the rocks rent, as it were, in mourning for their Lord; the grave gave up its dead, in that, by His Death, death was conquered; even sin, at that hour, parted with a soul which all his whole life it had held captive; and He, Who had scarcely any longer the form of Man, put forth His power, as God, over the heart of His lost creature. At His Circumcision (so truly had he taken the likeness of sinful flesh) He seemed to own Himself a sinner, 'conceived in sin.' Not lawless hands, but the Law of God, not the law as perverted by wicked men—'we have a law, and by our law He ought to die[c]'—but the command of God Himself enjoined the suffering and the shame, that He might not die. 'The uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant[d].' No voice proclaimed then, that He was not what He seemed, a sinner of sinful race. His Eternal Birth of the Eternal Father was

[b] St. John xviii. 37. [c] St. John xix. 7. [d] Gen. xvii. 14.

veiled; veiled that Birth, in time, of the Holy Ghost. His Virgin-Birth, 'without spot of sin, to make us free from all sin,' was known only to Angels. Man knew not the token of his Deliverer, nor Satan of his Destroyer. Satan had not bruised our Redeemer's Heel, had he known that the Cross upon which he stretched Him, would have crushed his own head. And so the guardian of His Virgin-Mother's purity, and her shield against reproach, hid the glory of His spotless Birth; 'Being, as was supposed, the Son of Joseph[e].' And, as though the Son of Joseph, He was made subject to the law of all who are conceived and born in sin; 'For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean[f]?' The Holy One was to receive the mark of man's unholiness; the Atoner was to be atoned for; the spotless Birth of the Creator was to be cleansed by the offering of two poor, worthless creatures, 'the pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons[g].' He Who came to do away all sin, was all His Life long to bear 'the reproach of Egypt[h],' the badge of shame, the antidote of sinful and debasing passion. Mute now were the praises of the Heavenly Choirs which, eight days past, were heard; heard in Heaven, but unheard on earth. The star was lighting the Wise Men on their way, but not as yet did it stand 'over where the young Child was[i].' Now there was one deep interval of shame. One only remnant was there of all that glory, and that hidden; the Name of Jesus, 'which was so named of the Angel

[e] St. Luke iii. 23. [f] Job xiv. 4. [g] St. Luke ii. 24.
[h] Josh. v. 9. [i] St. Matt. ii. 9.

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before He was conceived in the womb[k].' And is it thus, O Lord, that Thou hast in the flesh to receive Thine Eternal Name of Saviour, as though Thou wert rather of the number of the saved? Circumcision rather prophesied of Thee and Thy Resurrection, and the new beginning of our race in Thee, and our new birth and renewal, and the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh in Thee, and Thy Grace cleansing us from our birth-sin and the lust of the flesh, and freeing us from the wages of sin, eternal death; and must Thou be rather as one so cleansed? Must Thy sorrows thus thicken around Thy Sacred Infancy? Are such the Festivals we are to hold, of all the thirty-three years of Thy spotless All-Holy Life? Eight days past, Thy Birth, as an outcast from Thine Own, thrust aside, and in the wintry cold of a stable and a manger, and now suffering under the stern knife of the law! A homeless Stranger in this the land of our banishment, which we make too sadly our home, to open to us our Everlasting Home in Heaven! In the likeness of sinful flesh, thus also to suffer for us, that we, even in sinful flesh, might cease from sin!

Yes! such are the great Festivals of our Lord's Life on earth, all crowded within its first twelve days, (the symbol of the Presence of the Trinity in His Church collected from the four quarters of the world,) His Holy Birth, in cold and penury, homeless and houseless, owned, as their Master, by the rude cattle, disowned by ruder men, His sons, and thereupon the worship of the simple-hearted, and of the Heavenly

[k] St. Luke ii. 21.

Host: next, the shame as of a sinner, and thereon the worship of the three kings: as it is written, 'Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship.' 'The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts[1].' And this is their whole lesson for us, as of our Blessed Lord's whole Life in the Flesh. The joy of the world ends in sorrow; sorrow with Christ and in Christ, yea, and for our sins, for Christ's sake, ends in joy. 'Though He slay me,' 'yea, because He slays me,' 'yet will I trust in Him.'

We have many of us too sorely felt the one; how the world's joy ends in sorrow. Wherein has mostly issued the long peace even of the Church? Even the Holy Martyr St. Cyprian [m] had to mourn; 'Long repose corrupted the discipline which had come down to us from Him; every one was applying himself to the increase of wealth, and, forgetting both the conduct of believers under the Apostles, and what ought to be their conduct in every age, with insatiable eagerness for gain, devoted themselves to the multiplying of possessions. The world was renounced in words only, not in deeds. Priests were wanting in religious devotedness, Ministers in entireness of faith. There was no mercy in works, no discipline in manners. Ties of marriage were formed with unbelievers; members of Christ were abandoned to the heathen.' Oaths, false swearing, sinful adorning of the person, in men and women, unabating quarrels, lasting breaches of charity, self-abandonment to envy and dissension,

[1] Is. xlix. 7; Ps. lxxii. 10. [m] De lapsis fin. Ep. xi. init.

envenomed quarrels, carelessness as to single-mindedness or the faith, eagerness to exalt self, contemptuousness in high places, contempt of their sacred calling by the very Bishops, abandoning their Sees and their people for lucre and worldly vocations;—such fill up the Holy Martyr's picture of the fruits of ease, although resting only for awhile from heathen fires and racks. And what was the remedy? 'The Divine Judgment awakened our faith from a declining, nay, almost a slumbering state.' The Church was at once desolated and purified. The trying, severing, 'torrent blaze of persecution [n]' bore, through the Mercy of God, her thousands to Heaven, as in a chariot of fire. Alas! it was, to tens of thousands, the forerunner of the fires of hell, unless where the deserved sentence was turned aside through God's gift of deep repentance. 'Amid a wild carnage of the fallen, there remained but a remnant yet trembling; a small band, yet firmly standing [o].'

And when things were so in Martyrs' times, shall we be slow to confess the sins of our forefathers and our own? Shall we not rather thank God, although with awe, that twice in the later history of the Church among us, His Own Arm was laid bare in chastening us, and He allowed us wellnigh, at last, to be trampled underfoot of men in His Own Name. And now, after a dreary century, during which the Church here, as elsewhere, seemed sunk in a deep lethargy, shall we be startled by any pangs, or any threatened

[n] Christian Year, Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

[o] Ep. xi. fin. Comp. § 1. x. 2, xiv. 1, xxx. 5, 7, xxxi. 1. 7.

woe, the birth-pangs of a holier, more devoted state? Shall we choose our own chastisements, or think that we could bear any better than those we have? Shall we not rather, with holy David, commit ourselves into the Hands of God, to chasten, correct, wound, heal, sift, cleanse, as He wills, so that He give us Grace to bear, and 'deliver us not over unto death?' 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'

And with the Church, so our own souls also. We must not, would not, choose our suffering. 'Any pang but this,' is too often the wounded spirit's cry; 'any trouble but this.' And its cry may bear witness to itself, that its Merciful Physician knows well where its disease lies, how it is to be probed to the quick, how to be heathfully healed. 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' The holy Patriarch says not, 'though He slay all my children at one blow,' 'though He send His sore judgments of fire and sword, and take away my goods,' 'though He strip me naked, as I came from my mother's womb, and make me sit down in ashes,' 'though He smite me from head to foot with sores, and put my brethren far from me, and I become strange to my wife, and young children despise me;'—for all this, and more, had God already done. He saith, 'though He slay me.' This great servant of God takes, unknowing, into his mouth, the very words wherewith Satan had slandered him. 'Skin for skin[p],' said the Accuser, 'yea, all that a man hath, will he give in exchange for his life.' As if he would say, 'he bears what

[p] Job ii. 4. See S. Gregory on the place, T. 1, pp. 132, 3. Oxf. Tr.

moves him less, for fear of what would touch him nearer; he hopes that suffering without may save him from sufferings within; he gives willingly that he *hath*, to save that he *is*: his patience is a subtle love of self; he bears not all this for love of Thee, or out of faith in Thee and hope in Thee, but out of love for self, and the hope to escape what may wound self most deeply. Let the iron enter into his soul, and he will deny Thee then.' And Job, though he knew it not, was given over into the Accuser's hands. All he might destroy, except that inner life, whereby he held fast to God. 'Behold he is in thine hand; but save his life[q].' For how should Satan touch that life, which is God's very Presence in the soul? And Job, in those great words, refutes Satan's lie, 'Though He slay *me*, yet will I trust in Him.' He holds not back his very self. He gives up freely all which he *is*, his very I; like that devout Christian soul which, when sore pressed and oppressed by heaviness, yet held him fast by God, and said in an ecstasy of love and trust, 'If God casts me into Hell, I will hold so fast by Him, that He shall go there too; I will not let Him go, and Hell will be no Hell to me.' Truly! for the love of God would make Hell Heaven, as its absence would make Heaven Hell. 'Though He slay *me*!' Oh glorious faith of older Saints, and hope of the Resurrection, and love stronger than death, and blessed bareness of the soul, which, for God, would part with all but God, knowing that in God it will find all; yea, which would give its very self, trusting

[q] Job ii. 6.

Him Who took itself from itself, that it should find again (as all the redeemed *will* find) itself a better self in God! 'Though he slay *me*, yet will I trust in Him.' Oh blessed passage of the soul through the valley of death? which dies, to live; which hopes, though in away she is not; which *is* and is not; is slain and trusteth in Him Who slayeth her; 'dieth, and behold she lives[r].' For the soul lives, not in herself, but 'by the faith in the Son of God, Who loved her, and gave Himself for her.' Not she lives, but 'He liveth in her;' and so death to all but Him, yea, to and in her very self also, is His enlarged Life to her. It is the very life of the blessed, to be nothing in themselves, but vessels wherein God can pour in the fulness, and bliss, and richness, and transporting, overpowering, overwhelming sweetness and tenderness of His Love, and they, not of themselves, but through and with His own Love, shall love Himself. It is the very Joy of their Lord, whereinto they shall enter, to joy not with their own joy, but with His; to be themselves, only to be not themselves; to *be*, only to have within them the Being of God, Which is His Love.

Yet till we attain, by His Mercy, to Himself, and death itself is past, there is often need, amid the many, manifold forms of death, wherewith we are encompassed, for that holy steadfastness of the Patriarch's trust, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.' The first trials by which God would win us back to Himself, yea, though they seem to part asunder soul

[r] 2 Cor. vi. 8; Gal. i. 20.

and body, are often not the severest. Near as they touch us, they are, most often, without us. They may change the whole life at once; they may seem to reverse the prophet's words, and 'behind' it may seem 'as the garden of Eden, before, like a desolate wilderness[s];' the staggered, dizzied, soul may not dare to look backwards or forwards, to ought which belongs to this earth; they may leave the soul bared of all but itself; yea, scarely leave itself to itself. For, mostly, those severe blows whereby God brings the soul to itself, are a rending from it part of itself, since they are a rending from it what it loved, as, perhaps more than, itself; as even a Heathen calls a friend, 'the half of his soul[t].' Yet torn, bleeding, scarce alive, except for suffering, as the soul may thus be; bewildered, dead to all interest, or care, or pleasure in things around it; as if it were dead, yet are these the lightest trials of the returning soul. They reach not still its very inmost self. For to feel a nearness of God, even in chastisement, is a deeper, stiller, awful indeed, yet more thrilling joy, than the intensest, or the most even tide of joy, on which the soul rested, even as the gift of God. Even in the most penetrating of this life's chastisements, God replaces His gifts with the hope of Himself. Chastisement is blessed to the trusting soul, because though an awful form of His Presence, it *is* His Presence. 'The Lord[u]' saith the Psalmist, 'hath chastened and corrected me:—but He hath not given

[s] Joel ii. 3.

[t] Hor. Carm. L. 1, Od. 3. See St. Aug. Conf. iv. 6. p. 52, Oxf. Tr.

[u] Ps. cxviii. 18.

me over unto death.' His very chastisement is a token to the soul that it is not abandoned. And gladlier often to the bereaved soul is this one token, than all besides is heavy. What is the intensest blackness, if His Bow be in it and span it, and enfold and measure its height and breadth of darkness by the unfoldings of His Light, the radiant, glorious, pledge of His Loving-Kindness? To feel is to live. To know that one is chastened, is to know that one is not abandoned. Be any what he may, he feels that he is a son yet. The deeper the iron enters, the deeper he knows is the sore which God would lay open and heal; yet the deeper too the Mercy of God, Who gives not over what needeth so deep a cure. So true is that which even a Heathen[x] saw from nature, 'he draweth strength and courage from the very sword' which wounds him. Here too, indeed, is there need of faith and hope. For even these very chastisements of God, when they do not soften, harden. They, like every gift of God, yea, the very Gospel of His Son and the tidings of Redemption, are a savour of 'life unto life[y],' or 'of death unto death.' 'The sorrow of the world worketh death[z].' Sorrow which cometh from the love of the world only, hath its end in the world; sorrow, which cometh from the love of God, or turneth unto the love of God, hath its end in God. Sorrow of the world maketh rebellious against God; sorrow which subdues unto God, is from God. Times of God's sorest judgments have been times of man's deepest rebellions, and have fostered them.

[x] Ab ipso Sumit opes animumque ferro. Hor.

[y] 2 Cor. ii. 16. [z] Ib. vii. 10.

The recklessness of the impenitent has grown with the sternness of God's calls to penitence. How should it not be? Contempt of God's judgments is almost beyond the very sin of devils, who 'believe and tremble,' and is a near forerunner of the unpardonable sin, casting forth with a strong hand the last remains of grace from the soul. 'In that day[a],' says the prophet, 'did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine; let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of Hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts.' Yet since this is so, the more must the penitent think it an undeserved mercy of God, that his own sorrows have not hardened him, the more deeply must he thank his God that, through the prayers of others perhaps, or of the Church, or out of the abyss of God's forecoming Mercy, He, with the chastisement, gave the Grace to profit by it.

Yet these outward griefs are often but the 'beginning of sorrows[b].' Birth-pangs they often are, through which the soul is, by the grace of God, born again from its state of death to life in God. These are infantine trials fitted for the tenderness of new-born souls. Deeper pains are often reserved, until the soul, grown and strengthened through grace, can endure a more searching, fiery, cleansing. Outward trials bear

[a] Is. xxii. 12—14. [b] St. Matt. xxiv. 8.

with them their own witness; conscience owns them; nature itself approves them; our sense of justice takes their side and calls them good; pious examples of Holy Scripture put words in our mouth and teach us how to use them; God pronounces so manifoldly, 'Blessed are those whom He chasteneth.' In these, too, the soul itself is not disordered in its inner self. Wounded as it may be to the very 'dividing asunder of soul and spirit,' yet it is whole in that whereby it judges of itself; it can behold its own wounds and the Hand of God, wounding to make whole, slaying to give life.

Deeper and more difficult far are those sorrows wherewith God afflicts the very soul herself, and in divers ways 'makes her to possess her former iniquities[c].' A bitter thing indeed it is, to have to turn to God with a cold, decayed heart; 'an evil thing and bitter' to have destroyed ourselves. Yet having so done, gracious and merciful is it, if Almighty God shew us somewhat of the depth of that bitterness, that we may never know its full bitterness in the depths of Hell. Merciful and very good are all the scourges of the All-Good and All-Merciful. The deeper, the more merciful; the more inward, the more cleansing. The more they enter into the very soul, the more they open it for the healing Presence of God. The more they slay its very self, the more do they convey to it the virtue of Christ's Death. The less it lives, the more Christ liveth in it. Hence it has been seen, that God

[c] 'Prayer for persons troubled in mind or in conscience,' in 'Visitation for the Sick,' from Job xiii. 27.

mostly doth not send these trials at first upon the soul, but when it is somewhat strengthened by His grace, to endure this healthful probing and opening for greater grace. The beginnings of conversion mostly have sweetness, whereby God allures the soul from the deadening sweetness whereby it destroyed itself. 'Gracious is God,' said a holy man[d], 'Who doth not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, nor alloweth the worm of conscience to infest us beyond measure. And especially in the beginnings of conversion, He sootheth our ulcers with the oil of Mercy; that neither the amount of the disease, nor the difficulty of the cure, should become known to it, more than is beneficial; yea, rather a sort of ease smileth, as it were, upon it, which afterward disappeareth, when it hath its senses exercised, and thereon, perhaps, strife is appointed to it.'

Manifold are these clouds whereby God hides, for the time, the brightness of His Presence, and He seemeth, as it were, to threaten again to bring a destroying flood over our earthliness. Yet one character they have in common, that the soul can hardly believe itself in a state of Grace. 'If it be so,' is the common cry of all, 'why am I thus[e]'? Can God indeed dwell in a heart thus defiled? are this and this foulness the tokens of His Presence? Can God and Satan indeed have power over the heart together? I feel too miserably the presence of one; dare I indeed hope the Blessed Presence of the Other, unseen, unfelt, unknown? Where is faith, when Satan can, at will,

[d] S Bern. de conv. c. 5. [e] Gen. xxv. 22.

pour in his doubts? Or love, when all seems so dry and cold, and hard thoughts come in unbidden, as though lords and owners of the heart in their own domain? Where is life, when devotion seems so lifeless? Or holiness, when the soul is trampled upon by unholy thoughts, and its broken fences shut them not out? Where is any cleaving to God, when, at Holy Communion Itself, some chance thought or sight can part the soul with, if not from, its God? How is the heart broken which can thus rebel? how is that heart humble, which can thus judge others, which can see so acutely others' faults, rebel so proudly against any touch of shame, feel so sensitively to the quick any slight? Where, in all this dreary winter and this chill damp mist, are any tokens of the Presence of that Sun of the soul, which, where It is, encircleth and enlighteneth it from end to end, and there is 'nothing hid from the heat thereof?'

Hard indeed is it for hope to live, when faith thus seems dead and love grown cold. Hard is it to trust in God, when the soul's very self seems slain; and hope seems forbidden by the very senses, and sight and conscience, and self-knowledge. How can it be beloved by God, when it seems to itself so hateful? how endured by Him, when it cannot bear itself? Yet on that very ground is it beloved by God, because it hates itself. Deep hatred of what the sinful soul has been, empties it of that self-love which estranges it from its God; and He Who 'satisfieth the empty soul[f],' in His time shall fill it with His Goodness. Self-

[f] Ps. cvii. 9.

hating displeasure at its sin casts out its idols from His temple, that He again may more fully indwell it. It could not feel the full hatefulness of sin which it obeyed, nor the force of the weight which it resisted not, nor see the dreariness of the dungeon which had no light in it, nor know the poison it breathed, when it knew not the freshness of gales from Heaven. And so, perhaps most frequently, God for a time casts back the converted soul, and plunges it, as it were, amidst the phantoms of its former foulness, and allows it to be assailed and tortured by them, that it may learn the more to hate what He hates, and so, through its very hatred, may gain the love of what He loves.

Faint not then, thou weary soul, but trust! If thou canst not hope, act as thou wouldest, if thou didst hope. If thou canst see nothing but hell before thee, shut thine eyes and cast thyself blindly into the infinite abyss of God's Mercy; and the Everlasting Arms will, though thou know it not, receive thee and upbear thee. Hide thee in the Cleft of the Rock riven for thee, thy Saviour's Wounded Side, 'until this tyranny be overpast.' If buffeted by the waves, thou wouldest not let go a rope, which held thee to the Rock! So now, though 'all His waves and storms seem to pass over thee,' hold thee but the faster to Him Who, unseen, holdeth thee. Without Him, thou couldest not even hate thy sin. Hatred of what in thyself is contrary to God, is love of God. If thou canst not love with the affections, love with the will, or will to love. If thou canst not love as thou wouldest, do what thou canst. If thy heart seems to

have died within thee, cleave to God with the understanding. If God seems to thy mind, as it were, a phantom which to it has no reality, if thy prayers seem to be but words with no substance, sent idly into the air, not ascending unto thy God; if things unseen seem to thee a dream, things seen the only reality; if fervid words move thee not, if thoughts of love kindle thee not, if the Passion of Christ melt thee not, yet despond not; but 'out of the deep cry unto[g]' God, and He will hear thy voice. He has recovered out of deeper depths: for whence is the penitent recovered but out of 'the depths of Hell[h]'? 'Out of the belly of Hell,' says the prophet Jonas[i] 'cried I, and thou heardest my voice. I said, I am cast out of the sight of Thine Eyes, yet will I look again towards Thy Holy Temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depths closed me round about; the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains: the earth with her bars was about me for ever; yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord, my God. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine Holy Temple.'

'Though He slay me, I will trust in Him.' Seemeth this a great thing, brethren? The great holy words will mean yet more, 'Lo! if He slay me, I will trust in Him,' not 'although' only, but '*because*' He slayeth me. It is life, to be touched by the Hand of God; to be slain is, through the

[g] Ps. cxxx. 1. [h] Prov. ix. 18.
[i] Jonah ii. 2, 4—7.

Cross of Christ, the pledge of the Resurrection. Yes; then may our hearts be strung and nerved, when, at His pitiful touch, 'the sinew shrinks.' It is the Redeemer's Hand, which upholds while it seems to cripple, which strengthens while He seemeth to put forth His strength against our weakness. By His strength we have power with God, while we can only weep and make supplication unto Him[k]. Not sensible comforts, nor delight in prayer, nor His very Voice to the heart, nor tokens of His Presence, nor the overflowings of His consolations, *may be* such a proof of His love for the soul, as the unseen, unfelt, strength by which He keeps the fainting soul in life, to trust in Him. Consolation is the stay of the weakness of the creature; desolation was, for our sake, the choice of the Redeemer. When His Human Nature was all but perfected and consecrated by suffering; when the last act of obedience to the Father's Will 'even to the death of the Cross' was all but completed; when His perfect obedience was effacing the sins of a whole world, then He withheld from His Sacred Humanity the consolation of His Divinity, and, forsaken by man, He willed to seem to be forsaken by God also. In the entrance on His Ministry, that Voice was heard, 'This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased:' at its close, the Voice 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' is followed only by that, 'Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit[l],' to give us some glimpse into the mean-

[k] Gen. xxxii; Hos. xii. 3, 4.

[l] St. Matt. iii. 17; xxvii. 46; St. Luke xxiii. 46.

ing of that great word, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'

'Into His Hands,' brethren, let us now, for this year, and for all the years of time, and for eternity, 'commend our spirits.' Whether for the Church or for ourselves, let us not take ourselves into our own hands, or choose our own lot. 'My times are in Thy Hands[m].' He loveth the Church, which He died to purchase, His Own Body, and all the members of His Own Body, better than we can; He loveth us better and more wisely than we ourselves. He Who made us, loveth us better than we who unmade ourselves; He Who died for us, better than we who destroyed ourselves; He Who would sanctify us for a holy Temple unto Himself, better than we who defiled what He hallowed. Fear we not then any thing which threateneth; shrink we not back from any thing which falleth on us. Rather let us, though with trembling, hold up our hearts to Him, to make them His Own, in what way He willeth. If He willeth that we should be comforted, let His Will be ours; if, that we should have desolation, Lord, let us not draw back from it[n]. Pray we Him, by virtue of His Holy Circumcision, in what way He seeth good, to circumcise our hearts, to cut, yea, burn, if He see needful, in this life, and spare for ever. Let us neither outrun Him, nor hold back. Neither step on the waters without His

[m] Ps. xxxi. 15.

[n] Paradise for the Christian soul, Devotions to the All-Holy Trinity (Act of Resignation,) Pt. i. p. 81.

bidding, nor fear if you behold them boisterous. Be not troubled, if either for the time He withhold affliction, or if, without or within, He giveth us of His Cup to drink. Give we Him our hearts, to prepare, in whatever way He will, to be made fit vessels for His love, yea, for Himself. Circumcise, yea, cut them, Lord, round and round, until none of the vanities or love of this world cling unto them; break and bruise them in pieces, that they never come together again, as they once were; melt them, if Thou see good, in the furnace of affliction, or by the Spirit of burning, until Thou purely purge away their dross; press them, and oppress with anguish, if so only they can be emptied of all which is not Thou, or loved for Thee; give them faintness and weariness, if so only, they may 'faint for Thy' Heavenly 'Courts,' and long to rest in Thee Alone.

Only, O Lord, strengthen our hearts with that Bread which came down from Heaven, to give life unto the world, even Thyself; give us Thy grace, and so deal with us as Thou willest; 'give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou willest[o];' if Thou slay us, give us trust in Thee; 'O Lord, in Thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded:' let me not be confounded, for ever!

[o] St. Aug. Conf. x. 29, p. 204, Oxf. Tr.

SERMON IV.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

St. Matt. xx. 22.

'Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able.'

With glowing, burning fire of love did the two blessed Apostles say, 'We are able.' With their whole heart and with the lightning swiftness of their affections, did they say it; yet ignorantly. They loved their Master. They had shared all with Him till now; His poverty, His temptations, His loneliness, the contempt and upbraidings and strivings of the world. They thought that they could share all besides which was His, His Cup; because it was His. To love, nothing seems too hard, if shared with him whom it loves. They thought, perhaps, of toil and labour and weariness and other sufferings to which they were accustomed; but with the sustaining Presence of their Lord. They thought not of their Master being taken from them, of the seeming failure of their hopes, the delay of reward and glory to a distant day, and now, to see His Suffering. Often as He had warned them, they had

not been able to think of Him, as really giving Himself up into the hands of wicked men; His Power not put forth; His Glory turned into shame; Himself, the willing prisoner of a mad multitude, and themselves, powerless and forbidden to aid. Ignorantly they said it; for when He did drink of His cup in the garden, they could not 'watch with Him one hour,' but were 'asleep for sorrow.' When He gave Himself up to His enemies, they too forsook Him, and the Apostle of this day[a], who, first of the glorious company of the Apostles, was to shed his blood for His Name, stood not by the Cross.

Yet they said it with truth of heart; and our Lord promised then the truth of deed also, and His strength whereby to do it. *Now* they were unable; but Christ promises; and what He promises, He performs, that what they long to do, they shall hereafter have power to do. 'Ye shall indeed drink of My Cup.' But He tells them, that the future rewards shall not be given by any favour even of His Own, to those whom He had called 'My Friends.' 'It is not Mine to give,' in any way of choice or favour; 'but it shall be given to those for whom it is prepared of the Father.'

The blessed, glorious seats of Heaven shall be given according to the measure of faith and love which each, receiving first from the grace of God, shall, by his freed will, cherish. The measure of the bliss of His redeemed shall be according to their diligence in using His Grace, and the degree of attainment in all things pleasing to God, which by His Grace they shall reach.

[a] Preached on the Festival of St. James.

Your eternal rewards and everlasting lot in Heaven, if ye attain, will be given, not for mere asking, not to ambition or lofty desires, not for merely longing, but according to eternal laws of right and truth and holiness, whereby 'God will reward every man according to his works.' God gives each of you the grace and power, if ye too will, to do His Will. He gives to all freely. But 'God is no accepter of persons.' Whoever is holy, good, pleasing to Him, becomes so by using the grace of God which God gives him, having first given him the heart to use it. But although any good in us is God's gift in us which we have received, He will give to all whom He receives into Heaven, just that place for which, through their faithful use of His free grace, they are fitted.

Our Lord does not say to these two Apostles, that they *shall* sit near Him, as they longed; nor does He say to them, that they shall *not* so sit. But He tells them, that *then* was not the time for giving it; *then* both for the Master and the servant was the time for drinking the Cup of suffering. 'It behoved Christ to suffer, and after that, to enter into His Glory.' For the servant there is no other way than for the Master. The servant must suffer in subduing sin in himself, as his Master suffered in redeeming him from it, and paying the ransom of his soul. 'It *shall* be given,' then, when in the eternal brightness of the truth of God, 'the secrets of all hearts shall be open,' and in the light of His Holiness, no one shall envy another, no one shall grudge to another his greater nearness to the Throne of God, or his fuller knowledge

of God, or deeper joy; no one shall long for a seat above that which, in the Eternal Counsels of God, shall be allotted to his measure of faithfulness to the grace of God.

Even these great Apostles then, whom, from the ardent glow of their impetuous love, our Lord calls 'sons of thunder,' were, before the descent of the Holy Ghost, deceived in two ways. 1. They thought that our Lord would bestow by favour the glories of His Kingdom and nearness to Himself. 2. They were mistaken as to themselves, and their own power to endure that hardness, through which they were to enter into eternal Bliss. In a word, they knew fully neither their Master nor themselves.

This will always be. We judge of God by ourselves. No man who knows not himself, can know God. Man shuts his eyes to that, whatever it be, in God, which being unlike himself, he does not wish to see. These very judgments of the Apostles are repeated every day. Men think that they shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, because they say, 'Lord, Lord, and do not the things which He says.' They think that because they bear the name of Christ's disciples and are called Christians, He will own them as Christians in the Great Day. They think that they can drink of their Master's Cup, because they know not themselves, nor Him.

Strange it is, my brethren, but if ye have been turned away from God, and now are turned to God, ye know that the last thing in Heaven or earth, about which man, by nature, desires to know, is that which

most concerns himself; *himself*, his very self. Man will interest himself about all things around him. He will be curious to know the news of the day, what is passing in other countries, or perhaps the works of God, the courses of the stars or of the winds, the history of past ages, the structure of the world, or even of the human mind, or the evil of his neighbour. One thing, unless touched by the grace of God, he will not wish to know, nay, he will strive to forget, to bury it amid the knowledge of the things which he knows, the state of his own soul. He will seek to know all things, for this very end, to forget himself. Men wish to know about what they have, the goods which perish; they wish to forget what they *are*. They wish to know of the health of their bodies which must die; they strive, not to know the health of their souls which must live, in weal or woe. And why this? First, it is a trouble to people to look really into themselves. Then, in order to avoid the pain of looking into themselves, they persuade themselves that they know enough of themselves. Then, they half suspect that if they did look, they would find what they do not wish to see, and would have to give up ways which they wish to keep, to leave undone what they do, and do what they leave undone.

And so, if they look at all, they look at what is good in themselves, or at defects in their neighbours. They look in others at faults which they think they themselves have not, as a sort of balance for faults which they suspect they really have, but will not see in themselves. They think, like the Pharisee, 'I should

not have done what this man did; I should not have fallen like that; I should not lie, nor steal, nor be intemperate, as this, or that, or the other.' As though almost any one man had upon him the whole body of human sins, or as though it were to love God with the whole heart and mind and strength, not to break all His Commandments! Yet thus do men hide from themselves their own faults, and their neighbours' good; they behold their neighbours' evil and their own good; in order doubly to deceive themselves, both as to their own good and their own evil.

But to what end not to know now, what thou must know hereafter? Of what avail not to know on earth, when thou mayest amend it, what thou must know in the Day of Judgment, when thou canst not amend it? If Apostles, so fervent in love as St. John and St. James, before the day of Pentecost, did not wholly know themselves, how surely must thou not know thyself, unless, by the light of God's grace, thou look well into thyself! The very heathen knew that to 'know thyself' was the sum of true wisdom. They knew too, that, without pains we cannot know ourselves. They bade us thrice [b], before we sleep, review ourselves, what we had, in the past day, been and done.

If we know not ourselves, we cannot know God, nor love God, nor become less unlike God, nor become like Him. We cannot know God. 'If we *love* not our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God Whom we have not seen.' So too, if we know not

[b] Pythagoras.

what is so nigh to us as our own souls, made in His image, how can we know Him Who made them, Who made and Who fills Heaven and earth? If we understand not the least, how can we understand the Infinite?

We cannot know God, also, even because we cannot love Him unless we know ourselves. All things which God hath done and doeth, hath made and upholdeth and ordereth, are 'very good.' But they seem so to those only of humbled and cleansed hearts. 'God,' says the Psalmist, when sore tried by the evils of the wicked, 'God is nothing but[c] good, unto Israel' —but he adds, to the true Israel, 'the pure of heart.' To those who know themselves, all things work together for good, and all things seem to be, as they are to them, good. The goods which God gives seem 'very good,' and God Himself in them, because they know that they deserve them not. The evils which God allows and overrules, seem also 'very good,' because they see in them His loving Hand, put forth to heal them of what shuts out God from the soul. They love God intensely, in that He is so good to them in each, and every, the least good, because it is more than they deserve; how much more in the greatest! They love God for every and each, the very greatest, of what seem evils, knowing them to be, from His Love, real goods. For He, by Whom 'all the hairs of our head are numbered,' and Who 'knoweth whereof we are made,' directs everything which befalls us in

[c] אַךְ טוֹב Ps. lxxiii. 1.

life, in perfect wisdom and love, to the well-being of our souls. He fits every trial to the strength or sickness of that in us which is to be tried or purified. Now, if ye know yourselves, ye see quickly, at once, why just this trial was sent, and ye would bow before the justice of God, and adore Him for His Love. What is all the complaining in the world, but that either men forget God, and believe not that all things are from Him, or they forget themselves, and so know not the wisdom of His dealings with them? What we shall see hereafter, he who knows himself sees now —how perfectly God's ways are fitted for our souls.

Those who know God's works in nature see the end of every part of every herb and flower; they see how every part of our human body or of all the varied 'living creatures, each after its kind,' which God has made, exactly answers the end for which it was made, supplies its wants, upholds it in being. And can you think, that God Who hath 'so clothed the grass of the field,' Who hath so provided for the beasts which perish or for our own perishable bodies, hath provided less for the soul, which He made in His own Image and Likeness, which He gave His Son to save, which He would adorn with grace, beautify with virtues, draw by His love, make a dwelling-place for Himself here, in order to fit it to behold the Infinite Beauty and Majesty of His own Being and prepare it to enter into His own joy everlastingly? There, if we attain, we shall see in the Brightness of His Presence, how, from our birth in the flesh to that last most blessed and eternal birth, everything was, on God's

part, ordered, at each moment and turn of our being, in the fullest wisdom and love for us. Then we shall find that, on God's part, every single thing was bestowed or withheld, delayed or taken away, as should most tend to our salvation. Not so surely does the door turn upon its hinges, each part being fitted to the other, so that it should open and shut at our will, as our salvation turns on the events which God in His Infinite Wisdom has fitted for us and in His Love appoints for us. It remains for us only, by His Grace, to fit ourselves to them. Our whole lot is by God's love ordered for us as is best for each one of us; every the least event in our lives and the whole course of them are such as is wisest for us. All, our fulness or our needs, our joy or our sorrow, our disappointments or the gaining of our joys, things against our minds and our wills and our hopes, nay against our very desire (as we hope) to serve God, or God's granting our heart's desire, is fitted by the finest and most delicate Wisdom of God to something in our souls. He wounds them that they may be healed; He prunes them that they may bring forth more fruit; He takes away our earthly stay, that we may lean on Him. But then, in whatever degree we know our souls, we shall know and love God's will in each single token of His good-pleasure. A child who has loving and tender parents knows this. It knows, as far as it knows itself, that its parents give, delay, withhold, the things it wishes for, whether for the health of body or soul, wisely and lovingly. Much more must the Eternal Father of spirits, Who formed us for Himself,

and things around us for us, Who, before man's fall, made all things 'very good,' and now that man, believing the evil one, has drawn on himself the knowledge of good and evil, makes both good and evil work to his salvation, if he will,—much more must the Eternal Father, in Whose Hands are all things, man's heart and the things which touch and affect his heart, know how each the very least thing will, by His Grace, correct and amend that heart, and fit it, cleansed and purified, for His everlasting love. All the complaining in the world is, in truth, to deny that God knows what is best for each of us, and knowing, sends it. God knows us through and through. Not the most secret thought, which we most hide from ourselves, is hidden from Him. As then we come to know ourselves through and through, we come to see ourselves more as God sees us, and then we catch some little glimpse of His designs with us, how each ordering of His Providence, each check to our desires, each failure of our hopes, is just fitted for us and for something in our own spiritual state, which others know not of, and which, till then, we knew not. Until we come to this knowledge, we must take all in faith, believing, though we know not, the goodness of God towards us. As we know ourselves, we, thus far, know God.

This, then, is one great blessing of knowing ourselves, that we hereby come to know and love the doings of God towards us. Then is the ground of all rebellion against God's Will cut off, because we see, that even, in seeming evil, He knows and wills and works our good. Then is all rebellion turned into

love, because, knowing our sins and the punishment which sins deserve, we know and feel the love of God which we do not deserve.

Without knowledge of ourselves, I said, we cannot become less unlike God. For the first step to become less like Him, is to see that we *are* unlike Him, and to grieve, for love of Him, that we have injured His likeness in our souls. But none knows this truly, save the humble of heart, he who has often sifted himself in the sight of God, so that the light of God fell upon him and revealed him to himself. A man, except so far as he is in the grace of God, will own in himself just so much as he cannot help. No one would own quietly to himself, 'I am avaricious, or grasping, or niggardly, or vain, or worldly, or sensual, or ill-tempered, or conceited.' We see and know of many, that they have these or other faults; but they themselves, if they know anything of them, call them by light names, and soften them, or forget them.

But meanwhile, what thousand, thousand sins, which are not a man's chiefest outstanding sins, pass by unheeded! He lessens in his own sight what he cannot but see, and sees nothing which he can help. He blinds himself when he can. If he cannot shut out the light wholly, he shuts, or half shuts his eyes, that it may not disclose to him what he wishes not to see, *himself*. But thus, day by day, he adds to a load of unrepented, deepening, sin. Sin itself, if it lasts, blinds the eyes to itself. Conscience is a very tender thing. If we listen to it, to know ourselves or what we are doing, it speaks to us more plainly. If we hush it,

attend not to it, stifle it, we deaden it until it awake to condemn us.

Men think that they *know* themselves, because they *are* themselves. And yet of others we are all ready to think that they do not know themselves. You yourselves think that you know well that your neighbour has this or that fault. At least, people speak of their neighbours' faults undoubtingly, and condemn them, as though they well knew that, what they condemned in them, was quite true. Think you that in most cases, *they* know their own faults as much and as clearly as you think *you* know them; that *they* see them, as *you* see them? Surely, if many so saw their own faults, as others see them, they would be at more pains, by God's grace, to subdue them.

Since then, as thou thinkest, people around thee, those in whom thou seest ill, whom in thy mind, at least, thou condemnest, deceive themselves, how knowest thou, that thou art not deceived thyself? The very heathen knew this self-deceit. 'Change but the name,' they said[d], 'the tale is told of thee.' We know in what awful sins David was sunk. His conscience murmured doubtless, and shook his soul at times, during that long year of impenitence. But it needed a Prophet's voice to tell him, 'Thou art the man.' Thou seest that others are ignorant of themselves. How knowest thou, that thou knowest thyself?

One only way there is, as God bids you, 'examine yourselves.' 'Examine your own consciences,' our

[d] Hor. Sat. i. 69.

Church repeats, 'and that not lightly and after the manner of dissemblers with God;' 'examine your lives and conversation by the rule of God's commandments.' If thou hast not yet thoroughly examined thyself, be sure that thou dost not yet know thyself. Thou must examine thyself, that thou mayest know thyself. Thou must examine thyself, that thou mayest keep the knowledge of thyself, and not forget thyself. Thou must examine thyself again and again, as thou wouldest glean after harvest, that nothing be lost. Thou must examine thyself, not by the examples of those around thee, nor by the maxims of the world, nor heeding the praise (if so be) which men give thee, but by the light of God's commandments. Above all, thou must pray to thy Father Who seeth in secret, that He would shed His light into thy soul, to teach thee, of what to repent, what to amend; to turn thee inside out to thyself; that thou mayest know all, sorrow for all, leave all, be forgiven all, which is against the will and goodness of the All-Good God.

As that is true which the Truth spake, 'What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' so then is that also true, 'It profits thee nothing, if thou know about the whole world, and know not about thine own soul.' Though thou couldest know, not the things of the whole world only, but the things beyond the world, all mysteries and all knowledge, except the loving knowledge of God and the knowledge of thyself, it would profit thee nothing. Yea, it would be worse than nothing. Knowledge of all things out of thyself is but a baseless fabric, which

shall vanish into nothing; like the airy buildings in the clouds, but no real, solid, substance. Such 'knowledge' puffeth up, empty and vain, like a bladder (so the word is) distended with wind; but 'charity,' or the love of God or man, 'edifieth,' or buildeth up on the solid foundation, which is Christ.

My brethren, ye cannot, many of you, have much human knowledge, but ye can have Divine. Ye cannot know much now about earth or the things of earth; but ye may know of the heavens and the heaven of heavens, and Him Who dwelleth in the highest heavens and in the lowly heart. Ye cannot know very much of things which concern you not; but ye can know all which concerns you. Ye can know 'the love of God which passeth knowledge,' and 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding;' and ye can know the way to eternal life, even Him Who is 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' 'Whom truly to know is eternal life,' and 'then ye shall know, even as ye are known.' 'Many,' says a holy man[e], 'seek knowledge; few, self-knowledge. But if with the same zeal and care, wherewith worldly and vain knowledge is sought, self-knowledge were sought, it would be found more readily, and kept more usefully.' 'Where[f] shall wisdom be found,' asks Job, 'and where is the place of understanding? The depth saith, it is not in me; and the sea saith, it is not in me. God understandeth the way thereof and He knoweth the place thereof;

[e] Tract. de Interiori Domo. c. 10. inc. auct. int. opp. St. Bernardi. tom. ii. p. 354, ed. Ben. Al. de Conscientia, c. 2. Ed. 1586, tom. i. p. 1430.

[f] Job xxviii. 12, 14, 23, 28.

and unto man He said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding.' But 'thou must know thyself,' says a holy man[g], 'that thou mayest fear God; thou must know Him that thou mayest love Him.' In the one, thou hast the beginning of wisdom, in the other thou art perfected. For 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;' and 'the fulfilling of the law is charity.'

But above all seeking of thine own, and in all seeking to know thyself, pray God to enlighten thee. He will pour His grace into thy soul, and will shew thee thy own deformity and His restoring Hand; thy readiness to sin, the frequency of thy falls, and their occasions. He will teach thee to know thy weakness, and by His grace, to shrink from what, in thine ignorance, thou knewest not. And so, as thou knowest thyself and condemnest thyself, He will pardon thee; as thou seest thyself to be blind, He will enlighten thee; as thou knowest thyself to be weak, He will strengthen thee; as thou feelest thyself ready for all evil, He will lead thee to all good. For He will teach thee to seek Him, ask of Him, cleave to Him; and sooner shall Heaven and earth pass away, than that one who truly sought Him, shall not find Him. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away.' But His Word is, 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,' even the everlasting gates, where whoso entereth shall never more go out, but shall dwell before the Face of the Lord, in the joy of the Lord, for ever.

[g] St. Bern. in Cant. Serm. 37. § 1.

SERMON V.

THE BESETTING SIN.

HEBREWS xii. 1.

'Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race which is set before us.'

THUS does St. Paul close that glowing account of the deeds of faith under the Old Testament. He had first taught what faith was. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' Faith makes the things of the life to come, our life with God, our eternal rest in His love, and our glory amid that rest, as present to the soul, as if we saw them. They are or subsist in themselves eternally. They are as present in the mind of God, now, as they shall be to us, when we shall be amid them. Faith makes them to subsist in us. Faith is a divine knowledge, given by God, whereby we know the things which shall be after death, as certainly, though not as fully, as though we saw them. Faith makes them to exist in the soul. The being which they have, it makes to be in us. We see by faith, what

by our bodily eyes we see not; but we behold it as certainly, as if it were before our eyes. Blessed, if we lose not sight of it!

Then, St. Paul sets before us, one by one, some of the noble band of the faithful under the Old Testament, and shews us the sort of faith of Abel, and Noah, and Abraham; how they acted on their belief, shewed their faith by their faithfulness, forewent things present for the sake of things unseen, and obtained the praise of God, and the earnest of things to come. Then, from single heroes of a mighty faith, the captains of God's army, the leaders of the people, he goes on to the whole army of Martyrs and Confessors, who had suffered for God, before Christ came; who were 'stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword,' every word speaking of some noble deed of faith, crowning a life of faith. And so he turns to the Hebrew converts. They too might *then* be martyrs. The flame of persecution was lighted, and was around them. But what does he teach them? 'Having,' he says, 'so great a cloud of witnesses,' these witnesses to the might of God, and the power of faith, and the reality of things unseen, which yet in their souls they saw; 'having these witnesses,' encircling us as a cloud, uplifted above the earth, flashing forth with the light of God, the lustre of their mighty deeds, and the refreshing streams of their heavenly teaching, 'let us'—do what? follow their example? do and suffer what they did and suffered? St. Paul, as a wise teacher, begins with the beginning, not with the end. He

says—lay aside what hinders you from being like them, that so in the end, ye may be like them, with their Saviour and yours. 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.'

This is the first step. 'Cease to do evil,' and so 'learn to do well.' He speaks of us as in a race, a race for life eternal, of which our Lord and God, Who gives us strength to run, the Author of our faith, will be Himself the Finisher, will complete it in time, and reward it in eternity. Now, two sorts of things hinder men in a race, a weight to carry, or what ever and anon entangles their feet. What is the weight in our way to Heaven? Is it not the mass of worldly thoughts, cares, longings, the confused heap of sins, which bow us down, of which we confess, 'the burden of them is intolerable'? And what then, is the one sin which doth so easily beset us? It is, that we are mostly born with one special temptation; we have not, all, the same trials; but we have, each, one special weakness or passion or evil inclination, which besets us again and again, is ever twining itself around us, and from which until we disentangle ourselves, we make but little progress. It is the occasion of our stumbling, our falling, our slowness in heavenly things. It comes upon us, sometimes in the very same shape, sometimes in another. It takes us sometimes by surprise, sometimes by storm; sometimes in acts so slight that we heed them not, sometimes in temptations so vehement, that they carry us off our feet. It comes to us, mostly in a few ways, but these so in and out, as it were, sometimes in the

one, sometimes in the other, that till men examine it slowly, and take it away piece by piece, it seems much stronger and more manifold than it is. So you have felt when briars have entangled you and hindered your walking. The more you stumbled on impatiently, the more hold they seemed to have of you. If you took them off quietly, you were surprised sometimes, how slight a thing it was, which was hindering you.

St. Paul's words, then, suggest to us two sorts of work before us to be done by the grace of God: 1. We have to strive against the whole body of sin, everything which is against the holy will of God, 'every [a] evil inclination, all iniquity and profaneness, neglect and haughtiness, strife and wrath, passion and corruption, indolence and fraud, every evil motion, every impure thought, every base desire, every unseemly thought.' 2. We have all, probably, some one besetting fault, which is our own special hindrance. Both of these we must learn by looking into ourselves. They vary in all. No two persons have exactly the same temptations, as no two minds are exactly alike. And so we ought not to judge of others, nor can we judge of ourselves by them. We must look into ourselves. And this is the examination of ourselves which St. Paul bids us use; of which the Church reminds us; which the heathen knew to be good, though they knew so little of its use, without the grace of God; and which all who have grown in the grace of God,

[a] Bishop Andrewes.

have known to be necessary for the soul; and those most, who have been most holy.

We have, then, these two searches into ourselves to make; one into every part of ourselves; the other into that part of ourselves which is the weakest, and through which we most often fall. Of these, holy men recommend that we should begin with our besetting fault. For this, there are many reasons. It lies, most likely, at the root of many other faults. It burrows under ground, as it were, and comes up at a distance, where we look not for it. It branches out into other faults; it twines round and kills some grace; it hides itself behind other faults or virtues; it puts itself forth in the midst of them. It colours every other fault; it interferes with, or overshadows or overlays every grace. But the more this one fault spreads, the more, if you uproot it, you will clear of the field of your conscience; the more will your heart become the good ground, which, freed from thorns, shall bear fruit, thirty, sixty, an hundredfold, to life everlasting. When, in clearing your field or your garden, you pluck up thoroughly some one weed, whose roots lie deep and spread widely, you have often seen how much more and far more widely you have uprooted than you thought beforehand to be possible. You have loosened, too, the whole ground, or other lesser weeds are, without your knowledge, pulled up with it, and lie down and die. In like way, when you set yourself in earnest against your besetting sin, you uproot from your soul much more varied evil than you knew or thought of. We have a picture of

this in Holy Scripture. The Philistines were the enemies of Israel, and blasphemed God. When Goliath their champion stood, they stood and defied the armies of God; when he fell, they fled. Your besetting sin is your Goliath. Set yourself earnestly, by the grace of God, to subdue *it*, and the rest, will, by that same grace, give way.

Then, too, your besetting sin is that by which you most frequently offend God, and offend Him most. They who would keep a fortified place against an enemy, would defend most carefully its weakest points. It is there, that he would most assail them. So Satan most assails thee, wherever thou art weakest. But, wherever he has power over thee, he gains power over thy whole self. If thou sinnest, it is thy whole self which sinneth. It needs not, to make thee a sinner, that thou shouldest have the whole weight of all sin upon thee. If Satan holds thee by any one sin, he holds thee effectually back from God. It is by thy besetting sin that he makes thee most often displease God. By thy besetting sin he keeps thee down to earth, afraid of God, a stranger to God, empty of God, because thou art filled with things which displease God.

For thy besetting sin lies most deeply in thy whole nature. It springs from the most corrupt part of thyself. It hurts thee most, because it is the sin thou hast most love for. Other faults lie on the surface; this goes to the very depth of thy soul. Other faults are not so done with thy whole heart. Thou art in most peril as to thy besetting sin, that it take up thy whole

heart, master thy affections, occupy thy imagination, fill thy thoughts, engross thy time, enslave thyself.

Thou hast then great reason to be most watchful to uproot thy besetting sin, because 1. It is the root of other sins, gives occasion to them, makes them as bad as they are, makes acts which would have no sin, to be sinful, because they have this sin in them. And so, while thy besetting sin reigns in thy soul, it is the parent of many other sins ; when it is dethroned and destroyed, many others die with it.

2. It is the sin which has most hold of thy mind, and so it is the cause why thou most often offendest God. It comes to thee oftenest, tempts thee most strongly, and where thou art the weakest and yieldest the most readily. This is another separate evil. People are wont to think of sin as a weakness, whereby they do what is wrong. They own to themselves, that it is their weak point. They do not think to themselves until God has touched their consciences, that every single act is an offence against Almighty God, contrary to His Holy Will and to His Love. But this besetting sin so multiplies sin. It is called the besetting sin, because it continually besets thee ; that is, it is always about thee, always on the watch for thee. It entangles thee at every step. More of a man's sins are done through his besetting sin, than through all besides. It becomes his companion. He becomes so inured to it, that he does not think of it as sin, or justifies it, or, at least, pleads to himself that his nature is weak and that he cannot help it. Nature *is* weak ; but grace is strong, yea, Almighty. But so he sins more

habitually. He multiplies sins, whenever the occasion or temptation comes. And so there results, at last, a fearful heap of sin against Almighty God. God says that He 'will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil.' God takes account of single acts. Every single sin is treason against Almighty God. It is to choose what He forbids and what Satan tempts to. God says, He 'will bring *every* work into judgment, with *every* secret thing.'

Sin then has two aspects. It is a condition, a way of being, a whole, offensive to Almighty God. And every separate sin is a separate defiance, or neglect, or, any how, disobedience to Him. Dead leaves fall, one by one, light almost as the air through which they fall. What a heavy, putrid mass they become, when they are thickened together, full of all uncleanness! In like way a man commits sin, and thinks so lightly of it, that he will not be able to tell, after a time, how many very deadly sins he has committed. But, when he sees all, festering in their own corruption and foulness, within and around him, what a loathsome sickening sight they—yea he himself is to himself. A man may have committed the same grievous sin every day, or three times in two days. In two years he will have committed a thousand deadly sins against Almighty God. It has been the groundwork of solid conversion to God, to see, in a review of life, how many thousand sins a person has thus, through this one sin, committed against Him.

But even short of anything so frightful, the besetting sin grows, day by day, sometimes in darker forms, sometimes in lighter, but still continually. It is the cause of most of those acts for which thou wilt be judged; for which, but for God's mercy, thou wouldest be condemned.

3. Then, too, it is the occasion of a man's worst sins, because a man yields his mind most to it, goes along with it, does it with pleasure. All sin is, to choose something else rather than God. But to choose a thing eagerly, with zest, taking delight in it, against the wise love of God, this is the deadliest form of sin.

4. Then it will most likely be that, when not tempted in act, a man will be tempted to the thought of his besetting sin, both before and after. And so he acts his sin over again in thought, when he cannot in deed. Thus he may multiply his sin, beyond all power of thought. For thought is so quick; each minute may have many thoughts crowded into it. And minutes pass quickly by, when engaged in thoughts upon which a person likes to dwell. And so the sin is thought of beforehand, again and again, before it is done; and this is deliberate sin, and continual sin of full choice against the will of God. The sin is thought of afterward with pleasure; and this is confirmed rebellion against the will of God, even when the temptation to the actual sin is not present. No man, unless he has well sifted himself, can imagine how manifold these thoughts will be. The mind sinks naturally into the thoughts, which it likes to

dwell upon, as a stone rolls downwards. It rests there, when not moved elsewhere. They are its home, its resting-place. Yet in this way, not only are sins multiplied exceedingly, but the very mind and will are corrupted. Everything around us suggests something connected with what is nearest to the heart. To those who love God, all God's works speak of God; to those who deeply grieve, all sights or sounds furnish some fresh memorial of their grief; to those who love sin, all things suggest thoughts of sin.

Such then are grounds from the nature of the besetting sin itself, why thou shouldest earnestly and specially strive against it. It is thy deadliest enemy; that which most keeps thee from God, if unhappily thou art separated from Him; if not, still it is that which most offends Him, which hinders His love from flowing to thee and filling thee, which hinders thee from loving Him with thy whole heart. It is the cloud which chiefly comes between thee and the Face of God; the chain which binds thee down to earth; the snare which entangles thy feet, that thou 'runnest not the way of God's commandments,' followest not the steps of Jesus, Who died for thee, that, serving Him, thou mayest be with Him for ever. It closes thy heart to the full Presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, Who wills that, partaking of His holiness, thou mayest have the fulness of His joy.

But then for thyself, too, it is thus that thou wilt have most courage to fight. It has been, no doubt, discouraging at some time to most of us, that we could

not become good, all at once. We wished to please God; to be what God loves; not to do what He forbids; to do what He commands; but we knew not wherewith to begin. Our garden, which we were to make clean, seemed full of weeds. They seemed to spring up fresh every day; how could we clean it? And so the weeds of our sins grew, as they would, left to themselves, with more luxuriant, foul, rankness. It is said that one who thought thus, dreamed that He Who had given him his garden to cleanse, came to him and asked him what he was doing. He said, 'I lost all hope of cleaning my garden, so I laid down to sleep.' His Good Father said to him, 'Clean every day as much as thou coverest, where thou art lying, and all will be, in time, cleaned.' So God speaks to us. 'Set about some one thing for Me; set thyself to get rid of some one sin for love of Me, to become in one thing more pleasing to Me, and I will be with thee; I will give thee victory in this; I will lead thee on from victory to victory, from strength to strength; thou shalt "run, and not be weary; thou shalt walk, and not be faint."' By the same strength by which thou prevailest over thy first enemy, thou shalt prevail over the rest. In human warfare, those who fight are tired even by their victory; in Divine warfare, they are strengthened. For they fight not in human weakness, but in Divine strength; and 'My strength,' He says, 'is made perfect in weakness.' In victory over sin, God will give, if it be good for thee, sweetness of consolation, and the comfort of His Love, and a good hope of *His* continued favour, 'Who has begun a good work in thee.' In any

case, thou wilt find, that, in using the strength of God to subdue one sin, thou hast, in a way unknown to thyself, weakened the hold of many upon thee. So banded are sins and graces together, that he who makes progress in subduing one sin, has done much to subdue all; he who has made room in himself for the fulness of one grace of God, has prepared the house of his soul to receive all, has nerved his soul to strive and strain for all, through His grace, Who giveth all.

This is another good in fighting against thy besetting sin. Thou art gathered upon one point. Thou art striving with thy whole heart to please God in that point; thou wilt be asking for and using God's grace for this. But therewith, secretly, thou wilt be transformed thyself. In learning to subdue one sin, thou wilt have been learning how, in time, to subdue all. Thou wilt have learnt the wiles of the enemy, the weakness of thy own heart, the force of outward temptations, the need to avoid, if thou canst, the outward occasion, but, in any case, the necessity of resisting in the first moment of assault. Thou wilt know, for thyself, the might which God gives thee when thou so resistest, the power of instant prayer. Thou wilt have felt the peril of tampering with sin, the value of watchfulness, the danger of security after thou hast conquered; how the tempter withdraws in order to assail thee more vehemently; the peril of very little acts or thoughts, at all connected with the sin thou wouldest conquer. Thou wilt have tasted the blessedness of gathering up thy whole mind to serve God, and giving thyself to Him, morning by

morning, to please Him in this, and not to displease Him. Thou wilt have known, in thine own soul, the value of obeying, at once, any suggestions, which, by His Holy Spirit or in thy conscience, He giveth thee to avoid this or do that. These and other things thou wilt learn in thy first resolute, continued, endeavour to uproot, by God's grace, thy besetting sin. But, therewith, thou wilt have learned to become a good soldier of Jesus Christ; thou wilt have learned the way of the heavenly warfare, and the temper of its armoury; thou wilt have proved its weapons, and gained skill to use them. By one sin our first parent broke God's commandment, and brought sin into the world. He had forfeited the obedience of his innocence; he became disobedient. He sacrificed his obedience to his self-will, and became a rebel to his God; and all other rebellion flowed from this one. Sacrifice thou one darling passion to God, and thou wilt be, by His grace, on the way to recover full obedience to Him.

It is true that God could, if He would, transform thee at once, as He did Mary Magdalene, or the robber on the cross, or as He made St. Paul a lamb for a wolf, an Apostle for a blasphemer, full of love instead of full of fury. He might, in one moment, open thine heart as Lydia's, or the jailor's. He does, when He sees good, work wonders now in turning souls, in one moment, to Him. So, in the course of nature, He sometimes heals suddenly without human means. But it is to presume upon His mercy and to tempt it, to wait for this. God has not promised it, nor is it

the common way, which His Wisdom has chosen. In grace, as in nature, He wills that we should learn with pains, with industry, with watchfulness, with perseverance, with humility, with dependence upon Him. He would not drive out the Canaanites before Israel, at once; but He 'drove them out by little and little, lest the beasts of the field should increase upon them.' Amid too easy victory, we might neither know the deadliness of sin, nor its hatefulness to God, nor its power over the soul, nor the mercy of our Redeemer, nor the depth of the riches of the love of God. We might just miss that very lesson which, for all eternity, God is teaching us, by placing us amid the perils and temptations of this mortal life, in which, through His Grace, we have to work out our salvation amid toil, and hardship, and the deceitfulness of our own hearts, and the world's seducing, but deadly sweetness.

And now, before I go further, will ye, my brethren, in such leisure as ye shall have, think, during this week, each of you, within your own hearts, what *your* besetting sin is? It is as manifold as human minds are. 'In many things we all offend,' the Apostle says. But besides those manifold infirmities, negligences, omissions, most have, as I said, some one leading fault; the captain of all his faults; that which most enters into all. The most widely destructive are some appetites of the body. Other sins slay their thousands; sins of the flesh, their ten thousands. But as to spiritual sins also, in some, it is pride; in others, vainglory, or love of praise, or vanity about their poor bodies or their minds; in others, envy or jealousy; in

others, unforgivingness or bitterness; in others, discontent or restlessness; in others, selfishness; in others, hard-heartedness, or want of sympathy or of tenderness; in others, sloth; in others, self-will; in others, anger; in others, ambition; in others, covetousness; in others, self-complacency; in others, perverseness or obstinacy. Alas, my brethren, how many enemies there are, who would dispute with us the love of God, and our salvation! But mightier is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. Many though your enemies are, when their champion is dead, the victory is, in earnest, won.

Ask God then in earnest prayer to shew you, each of you, wherein *his* chief fault lies. Think, when death, and the Day of Judgment comes before you, what sin most frightens you; or by what you fall most often; or for what your conscience most reproaches you; or against what you have made most good resolutions, and have broken them; or what fault it would seem hardest to you to give up; or what makes you most unhappy, or weighs most upon you when alone; or what seems most to keep you back from God, or afraid to think of Him; or what seems to stand most in your way, when you would wish to serve God; or about what your conscience oftenest smites you in hearing God's Word, or reading some good book; or in what you would least like others to know you just as you are; or what you feel most guilty about, when it is blamed in others; or what frightens you from coming to Holy Communion, or when you come to It;

or what sin you are most tempted to turn away from and hide your own eyes from, that you may not see it; or again, on the contrary, what subject your thoughts, when you have nothing else to do, most dwell upon; or what thoughts flash across you, amidst other occupations, and come oftenest to you, and you entertain them or take pleasure in them; or for what others have most often blamed you; or what you recollect, when you were little, was your chief fault, of which your parents oftenest told you. In some or other of these ways, God will shew you wherein your chief fault lies; or those who know you well and love you, could help you; or perhaps God may, all at once, if you are in earnest, bring it before you.

You will, I hope, by God's blessing, have been encouraged to-day to fight the good fight of faith. God willeth that you should prevail. He will help you, Who wills to crown you. Only purpose to fight, as St. Paul bids you, 'looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith.' In the Name of Jesus is untold strength. Without Him, ye can do nothing; with Him, ye can do all things. For He will do all for you. Only He will do it, with you, in you, through you, not without you. He has overcome sin once *for* you, and slain it by His own Death. Now, if ye will, He will overcome it *in* you. When your hearts fail, He will comfort you; when ye are weak, He will strengthen you; if ye stumble, He will uphold you; if, amid real strife, ye fall, He will lift you up; if ye be bruised, He will bind you; if ye be wounded,

He will heal you; if ye be faint and weary, He will refresh you. Only look to Him, pray Him; and He will be in life your strength; in death, your stay; in eternity, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, 'your exceeding great Reward.'

SERMON VI.

VICTORY OVER THE BESETTING SIN.

St. Luke iv. 1, 2.

'And Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil.'

Our Blessed Lord endured temptation, as well as whatever besides He did and suffered, for *us*. It must have been one of His most grievous Sufferings. Whence in our Litany we beseech Him, 'by Thy Fasting and Temptation, Have mercy upon us.' Within Him there was nothing to yield to temptation. He was All-Holy, being the Son of God. There was nothing in Him which could rebel, could balance between good and evil, could be drawn towards evil. In our temptations, there are four stages. First, the thought is suggested; then comes an inward pleasure in the thought; then follows the struggle; and men consent or do not consent; they yield in act, or conquer. *Our* nature, being corrupt, has a feeling of inward pleasure in what it likes, even though God forbids it. If through the Grace of God

the feeling is put down at once by our will, it belongs to the sinfulness of our nature, not to our own. By putting it down, we gain the victory over our own sinfulness. To yield even in thought, by an act of our own, is sin. Our Blessed Holy Lord ever beheld sin, as God, with the same eyes as God the Father. His Human Will was ever perfectly one with His Divine. In Him there was neither sinfulness, nor sin, nor capacity for sin. He ever hated sin, which He came to destroy, with a perfect hatred, while He loved us sinners.

To Him, temptation was simply suffering. To restore our nature wholly, He willed to endure in our nature the presence of temptation. Loathsome to Him above all thought of ours, must have been the presence of that rebel being and his accursed touch. Intensely hateful to His All-Holy soul must have been Satan's smooth words, his hypocritical suggestions of evil under the guise of good, his alleging the words of God in defence of rebellion against God, and the thought put before Him outwardly, that He too should rebel against His Father. This, too, He endured for love of us, to conquer Satan in this way also in our nature, and to teach us how to conquer him.

Satan tried against our Holy Lord the threefold temptation, by which he conquered the first Adam. First, the desire of the flesh, that is, of what, in us, the flesh thinks necessary for it, what we think it must have, and are tempted to give to it against the will of God. This was when he said, 'If Thou

be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.' Then Satan tried 'the desire of the eyes,' or what in us is covetousness, when, 'in a moment of time, he shewed our Lord all the kingdoms of the world.' Then he hoped to find what, in us, is 'pride of life,' or vain glory, when he said, 'If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence, for it is written, He shall give His Angels charge concerning Thee.'

Adam gave way to the desire of the flesh, when he ate the forbidden fruit; to pride, when he listened to Satan's 'ye shall be as God'; to the desire of the eyes, or covetousness, when he hearkened to his 'knowing good and evil.' Our Lord, in our Nature, not only defeated Satan in these same things, but taught us how to overcome them. First, by answering Satan at once. To hesitate, to parley with Satan, is the first step (as you will unhappily have felt) towards defeat. We are in our own power, at the very first moment of temptation, in a way, in which we are not afterwards. Our mind is free, unclouded; our will, firm. We can then, by God's help, gather ourselves up in one, and cast the evil one from us like a serpent. It has become a proverb from sad miserable experience, 'Who hesitates, is lost.'

Secondly, in answering Satan, our Blessed Lord does not vouchsafe to enter into his subtleties. Satan twice says, 'If Thou be the Son of God.' It may be, he wished to know whether He were the Son of God, 'the Seed of the woman,' Who, he knew, was to crush his head, and destroy his kingdom. To this

our Lord answers nothing. He does not enter into questions, whether to do this were, or were not, befitting the Son of God. He simply puts down Satan with words of Holy Scripture, teaching us in our fight with Satan to set before us God's plain words, to take some one plain command of God, and say to him and to ourselves, 'It is written.' Temptations are sometimes very subtle. But the conscience, enlightened by God's Holy Spirit, will readily see in them some one thing, which is plainly against God's voice within it and His Word. Hold fast to this, and it will lead thee. Thus Satan often suggests to people, 'This or that is not to break the seventh commandment.' Call to thyself the text, 'Thou, God, seest me,' or, 'God shall bring every secret thing into judgment.' Think whether you would do this or that if Jesus were by, or your parents, or one you loved and respected; and then think, 'Can I dare do this, since God is by, in this very room?' And so, as to any grudge to one another, Satan tells you, 'You cannot help feeling so and so towards such an one. You would not do him any injury. You would not wish him evil.' To wish or to do evil would be greater evil. But call to thyself quickly, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' Did our Lord love us, when we were good or when we were evil? And so on, in other temptations.

Thirdly, our Lord teaches us, that there is an order in Satan's temptations; not the same order in all, as

perhaps He meant to teach us, when He appointed that His temptations should be related in a different order, by St. Matthew and St. Luke. In both, the first temptation is that of the flesh, perhaps, because this is the first and widest and most deadly temptation of men. Then, in St. Matthew, follows that to vain-glory, perhaps because we are tempted to vain-glory, through our very victories; and then perhaps the order was varied in St. Luke, because covetousness may lead to vain-glory, or vain-glory to covetousness.

But on the subject of which I was speaking to you last Sunday, our besetting sin, our Lord has been thought, by successively subduing Satan in each of our three chief temptations, to teach us to gather ourselves upon our temptations, one by one, and so when we have, by His grace, thoroughly uprooted one, to go on to uproot another.

But now, before going further, I must again say, that, in speaking of each one's chief fault, I do not mean certain open deadly acts of sin, which a person cannot do, and at the same time be a Christian at all. There are some things which ought either never to have been at all, or if, unhappily, they ever have been, ought never to be again. You would, of yourselves, understand this, if I were to speak of murder. You could not picture to yourselves a man committing murder again and again, and repenting, and resolving not to do it, and breaking his resolve, and again murdering another. Even this, no doubt, has been done in lands where people have been more tempted

to deeds of violence, than men in this land now are. In *this* self-deceit we should see, how far the human heart, and so, our own, can deceive itself. 'The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and' of itself 'incurable[a].' But what says God's word? 'Be not deceived. Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.' Plainly, God is not here speaking of even these sins, if repented of. God forgives all, for which He gives the heart to repent. And further, when He ranks the 'covetous' or 'revilers' with those extremest sins, He means the extreme form of these sins. St. Paul is speaking of sins which kill the soul at one stroke. God may bring the soul to life. But the sin itself is death. Do not deceive yourselves, my brethren; but judge of those sins to which ye are tempted, by those to which ye are not tempted. In sins to which ye are tempted, the temptation bribes you. When ye are not tempted, ye can judge, as God bids you. As then ye would not think of a person's committing murder again and again, and repenting again and again, and yet being a Christian, so neither must any of you, married or unmarried, do those things which God forbids, and think that you are Christians, because, when the sin is done and the temptation over, ye wish that ye had not done it.

[a] Jer. xvii. 9, אָנוּשׁ is so translated, Job xxxiv. 6, Jer. xv. 18, Micah i. 9, of 'a wound'; Jer. xxx. 15, of 'sorrow.' In Isaiah xvii. 11 it is rendered 'desperate'; and so our translators probably mean, in this place, that the heart is 'desperately' sick, that is, difficult to be cured, or, by human help, incurable.

It is true, that even such deadly sins are to be conquered in the same way as others. It is true, that no one must despair, into whatever sins he falls. But when Holy Scripture speaks of our Christian warfare, it means a warfare whereby we should be wholly conquerors over such sins, as drunkenness or the deadly sins of the flesh, since the Apostle would have those who so sin, separated from the common intercourse of Christians, that they may be ashamed.

But although those sins kill at one stroke, other sins steal away the heart from God, and banish God from the heart. A vessel will sink, whether filled with heavy stones or with sand. Fine grains of sand will bury travellers in the desert. Fine flakes of snow, so light that they seem to hang in the air, and scarce to fall, will, if they gather over the sleepy wayfarer, extinguish life; if they drift, they will bury whole houses and their dwellers. Fine, delicate sins, as people think them, will chill the soul and take away its life.

In speaking, then, of the battle which ye have to fight with sin, I *do* mean a battle for your life, for your undying souls, a battle, in which your prize is to win God; your loss, to be shut out from God, and to be with devils.

But I do *not* mean, chiefly, strife with such sins, as, if ye guard yourselves diligently, ye need never have to fight with. No one is plunged into all sin at once. No man would be tempted to commit murder, who had not often given way to strong passion. No one would be tempted to be drunk, who had not often

indulged himself more than he knew to be right. No one would be tempted to great dishonesty, who had not allowed himself in petty acts, of which he thought lightly, but which he would be ashamed to have known. And so, no one would be tempted to grievous sins against the seventh Commandment, who had not first tampered with less.

I *must* say this, my brethren, lest any of you should think that I set before you, as your Christian warfare, a fight, wherein the question would be, whether ye should be Christians at all. If any, unhappily, have this fight, let them not think themselves shut out. They must use the same means; yea, they must use them the more earnestly, because they are tempting the long-suffering of God, and stifling His grace, and provoking God to withdraw it, and deadening their own hearts, and searing their consciences with a hot iron; and what is so seared and deadened may be left by God, and so, may never again live. Surely our conflict is, to uproot everything which interferes with the love of God, and the thought of God, and the likeness of God in our souls. Surely our warfare is, to subdue our whole souls, every thought and wish and motion of our hearts, to the will of God; so that we should will, love, choose, avoid whatsoever God wills and loves, and willeth us to choose or avoid. What saith Scripture? 'He that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as He is pure.' 'Be ye perfect, as your Father, which is in Heaven, is perfect.' 'As He is, so are we in this world.'

I gave you some hints last Sunday, how you might

each (if you knew it not already) discover your besetting sin, hoping that some thoughts would help one of you, some another. For not only has God made us differently one from another, but we ourselves increase in ourselves, each our own fault. We, most of us, come into this world with some leading good disposition which God gave us; and we bring with us, mostly, some leading wrong temper, through the corruption of human nature, from our earthly birth. That one fault is our besetting sin. But even that one fault would not have so much hold upon us, had we used the grace which God, through Baptism, entrusted to us, and which He has ever since been renewing to each of us, if we would have it. This besetting sin it is, I said, in which our conflict for life eternal chiefly lies. This if we subdue, we shall most grow in the grace and the love of God. For this sin most closes our hearts to His grace and love.

But if any of you have not been able to discover your besetting sin, or should not be certain about it, do not therefore give up having some special battle with your sins, some one strife in which, by God's grace, you shall endeavour to have complete mastery over some one sin. Pursue, strike it down, whenever it appears. One blow will not do to death a besetting sin. It would not be well for us to have the victory so easily. We might be puffed up with our success, and think success an easy matter, in our own hands. We might think it our own work, not God's, and so cast out one devil by another, pride, and in the end be the slave of both. It is this mistake, as though sin

were an easy thing to conquer, which makes people linger so securely in their sins. They do not like to part with them now, and think that they shall be able to part with them when they please. They hope to have their pleasure in them now, and yet be free from them as soon as they wish. None can know how hard it is to get rid of any, even deadly sin, until they in earnest strive. And yet they half suspect that it is very hard; but they do not like to own it to themselves, lest they should be constrained to strive in earnest.

And yet, on this very ground, thou must not be discouraged by any defeats. We should be humbled for them, always ask God pardon very humbly for each of them, for Jesus' sake, but never despond about them. Whatever a man's besetting sin is, he has, through careless childhood, or self-willed, self-pleasing youth, strengthened its hold upon him. Thin, fine, invisible, as a gossamer's thread, when the light from God shines not upon them, seem the single threads of our sins. The enchantress[b] sin smiles sweetly on you, that you may conceive no ill, until she has wound them slowly round you. When she has wound them, she will clap her hands and say, 'Thou art mine.' Slowly they intertwine, line with line, fibre with fibre, sin with sin; once intertwined, no human strength can burst the tightened cord. Stronger than thou, is he

[b] The language and image are taken from Southey's Thalaba, viii. 21—28. All deep moral poetry has a sacred meaning beyond its words. A Hebrew proverb says, 'Evil desire in the beginning is like a spider's web; afterwards it is like a cart-rope.' Tract Succah.

who, whilst thou wert asleep and listless, wound them round thee; but stronger than the strong man is He Who will unloose thee. Yet, one by one, didst thou let these cords pass over thee; by little and little didst thou give thyself to be bound; little by little will God unbind thee; that thou mayest know into how evil and sore a bondage thou hast sold thyself, how helpless and powerless thou art to free thyself.

If thou canst not find out thy chief fault, apply thyself to any bad one. It is better to gather thyself to an earnest conflict with almost any one, than to lose thy time in debating which to grapple with. Whilst thou art engaged in earnest about one, God will disclose to thee others. Persons are often mistaken as to their chief fault. They think it to be one, while it is another, because they do not know themselves. And so they hew at the branches, not at the trunk. Still, hew on, and God will guide thy strokes. One, practised in the knowledge of others' souls and of his own, could often help thee. In any case, God will not be lacking to thee, if thou art in earnest, and not lacking to Him.

In this warfare there are some rules, alike for all sins; some, special to each; some, which relate to self-knowledge; some, how to be on our guard; some, to help our repentance; some, whereby we may gain strength to fight.

It is of the very greatest moment, to know the occasions of our sin, and the way in which it shews itself. To know the occasions, puts us on our guard; to know how our sin shews itself, gives us the means

of stopping it. Thus, as to these occasions; one is made angry, if he is found fault with roughly, or even at all, or slighted, or spoken slightly of, or laughed at, or kept waiting, or treated rudely, or hurt even unintentionally, or if his will is crossed, or he is contradicted, or interrupted, or not attended to, or another be preferred to him, or if he cannot succeed in what he has to do. These sound little things, my brethren, when we speak of them in this house, in the Presence of God, and in the sight of Eternity. But these and such like little things make up our daily trials, our habits of mind, our life; our likeness or unlikeness to God, Who made us in His own Image; our eternity.

Our first step is to know these things; our next, not to despise them. For such as our acts in them are, such do we become ourselves, and as we become now, so we shall be everlastingly. In these little things, then, you must know yourselves, and thank God that, by taking heed to such little things, you may please Him.

As you learn to know yourself, you will come to be upon your guard: and morning by morning, you should tell Almighty God in simple words what are the temptations to this sin, which, by His grace, you would subdue, and ask Him for grace. Tell Him also, the wrong ways into which it betrays you, one by one, and pray Him to give you strength to keep from the least shadow of them.

Even in graver sins, it is very needful to observe whether the temptation begins from within or from

without. Thus, of two men who are greedy, to the one the greediness will begin with the thought; to the other, suddenly, in the act itself of taking food. Thou must guard specially against that which is to *thee*, commonly, the first beginning of the sin. This will be the case even as to much graver sin. To dwell with pleasure on praise, to be fond of dress, of being admired, or loved, to go over in the mind soft words, have most often been the beginning of deadly sin, where there was no other temptation to it. But in all cases, you must set yourself diligently to observe where the temptation begins. For this is the entrance of death, which you must the more carefully close up. The remedy in one case might be to check vanity; in another, it would be to abstain, at least from the fulness of food, or from strong drink. Again, if our temptation were anger, we might perhaps be quiet when no one provoked us, and yet suddenly surprised by any slight rudeness of another, and resent it; or, if we were of a quieter sort, we might not be tempted to resent it at all, but brood over it in our souls, and cherish unlove within us.

Then, it is useful to have special rules, with regard to the special sin. Let them not be too hard, nor for too long a time. It is easier to set before one a rule for a short time. If we find it good for us, we shall gladly renew it.

Thus, if we wish to gain contentment, we might try such rules as these. 1. Allow thyself to complain of nothing (not even of the weather), knowing

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that everything is ordained or overruled by God. 2. Never picture thyself to thyself under any circumstances in which thou art not. 3. Never compare thine own lot with that of another. 4. Never allow thyself to dwell on the wish, that this or that had been or were otherwise than it was or is. Almighty God loves thee better and more wisely than thou dost thyself. 5. Never dwell on the morrow. Remember that it is God's, not thine. The heaviest part of sorrow often is to look forward to it. 'The Lord will provide.'

Some few simple rules of this sort will be of use against any other ruling passion. They brace the soul; they give it a definite steadfast aim; they teach it to fight, not as uncertainly; they set acts before it, whereby it may please God. They give it tests to itself, whether it is exerting itself to please God or no.

Then do not try only to abstain from sin, but strive, by God's grace, to gain the opposite grace. If thou wouldest save thyself from falling backward, thou wouldest throw thyself forward. If thou wouldest not slip back into sin, thou must stretch forward to Christ and His holiness. It is a dull, heavy, dreary, miserable, toilsome way, just to avoid sin. It is to give up the miserable pleasure of sin, without receiving in return the heavenly pleasure of delight in God. It has nothing generous, nothing noble, nothing ennobling, nothing worthy of the price paid for us, nothing befitting what we have been made, the sons of God. Thou wouldest not simply not be

impatient; thou wouldest long to be like thy Lord, Who was meek and lowly of heart. Thou wouldest not only not openly murmur; thou wouldest surely long, like the beloved Apostle, to rest on Jesus' breast, and will what He wills. Thou wouldest not, only not be a defiled and loathsome thing! Thou wouldest have thy soul a fit dwelling for God the Holy Ghost; thou wouldest have thy body fit to be transfigured after death into the heavenly glory of thy Lord, and radiant with His purity. Thou wouldest not have one thought unmeet for the heavenly Inhabitant; thou wouldest have thy thoughts free to soar aloft to thy future dwelling-place, and be, not with the beasts which perish, but with the holy Angels, with them beholding, adoring, loving, their and your Lord. Thou wouldest not only escape hell, thou wouldest long to have thy capacity enlarged to contain the Infinite love of God.

And now to review the method of this warfare. This is a practice by which others have in a few months gained more than in years before.

First go into thyself; ask of God light to see thyself; bear to know thyself, and to know well what thy sins are; and resolve firmly, by thy Saviour's help, to part with them, rather than with Him.

Then observe, which of these is thy besetting sin. If thou canst not find this for thyself, another, as I said, perhaps may tell thee. Any how, take steadily some one sin, which seems to stand out before thee, to root it out, by God's grace, and every fibre of it. Purpose strongly, by the grace and strength of God,

wholly to sacrifice this sin or sinful inclination to the love of God, to spare it not, until thou leave of it none remaining, neither root nor branch.

Then, as to this very sin, look carefully, day by day, what gives rise to it. Observe, with especial care, whether the temptation comes to thee from within or from without. But observe also all the ways in which this sin overtakes, surprises, masters thee; that thou mayest be on thy guard against the assault and against thyself.

Observe too, as well as thou canst, the very ways in which thou yieldest to the sin, thine anger, impatience, or whatever else it be. Observe the very acts or words thou most often usest, in giving vent to it. Thou wilt find, very likely, that it is some one, or some few ways of acting or speaking, into which thou fallest again and again. If thou art on thy guard, thou wilt often be able to stop the usual vent of thy sin; if thou stop this, thou wilt have gained time, by God's grace to stop the sin too.

As you observe these, fix them in your memory in the best way you can. If you can write, write down something which may recall them. If you cannot, God, if you are in earnest, will help you to remember them.

Fix, by God's help, not only to root out this sin, but to set thyself to gain, by that same help, the opposite grace. If thou art tempted to be angry, try hard, by God's grace, to be *very* meek; if to be proud, seek to be *very* humble. In this way, God, seeing thy earnest wish to please Him, will help thee more;

and thou wilt be further from the borders of sin, and so in less peril.

Then frame to thyself, or ask some one to help thee to form for thee, some simple rules, which may help to guard thee, or check thee from giving way to thy sin, or which may aid thee in gaining the grace thou desirest.

These things thou mightest do, once for all, or for a long time, while thou art engaged in battling with and destroying *this* sin. It will not hinder thy work, to think how thou mayest please God; or thou mayest on Sunday, think with thyself, or ask one who will help thee. Thus far is like making the instruments of thy daily work. When thou once hast them, they may require sharpening from time to time; but thy daily work is to use them.

Thy daily exercise may be very short. God looks not at the length of words, but at the earnestness of thy heart. If thou hast longer time, God will look graciously upon thee, the more of thy time and thought thou givest to Him. In this too God saith to each of you: 'If thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou have little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little: for so gatherest thou to thyself a good reward in the day of necessity.' If thou hast but little, a few minutes will suffice.

When you wake, or as soon as you are dressed, offer up your whole self to God, soul and body, thoughts and purposes and desires, to be for that day what He wills. Think of the occasions of the sin likely to befall thee, and go, as a child, to your Father

Which is in Heaven; go to Him Who died to redeem you, and tell Him in child-like, simple words your trials. Be not ashamed of using simple words, or of telling Him your trifling troubles, or trials you are ashamed of. We listen gladly to our children, as they tell us their little troubles. To God, all of ours is, in itself, alike little. But all which concerns our soul is not little to Him Who sent His Son into the world to redeem us; it is not little to Him Who became Man and died for us. The measure of the soul's value is His Love Who is Infinite.

You can tell Him, then, your trials, and ask for grace, in some such simple words as these;

O good Jesu, my Saviour, and my God; Thou Who didst make me, knowest how weak I am. Thou knowest, Good Lord, that I am tempted to—[*then name the temptations to it, and the ways in which you sin, as well as you know them*]. But, Good Lord, for love of Thee, I would this day keep wholly from all [*naming the sin*] and be very [*naming the opposite grace*]. I will not, by Thy Grace, do one [N] act, or speak one [N] word, or give one [N] look, or harbour one [N] thought in my soul. If Thou allow any of these temptations to come upon me this day, I desire to think, speak, and do, only what Thou willest. Lord, without Thee I can do nothing; with Thee I can do all. Accept, Good Lord, this my desire; help me by Thy Grace that I fall not, or if I fall, bring me back quickly to Thee, and grant me to love Thee better, for Thy tender mercy's sake.

It will help thee much in thy warfare, if thou first

set before thy soul thy Lord, as He shewed forth that grace which thou wouldest copy. If the grace be humility, think of Him washing the disciples' feet; if meekness, think of His receiving the traitor's kiss, and how thou hast betrayed Him by thy sins; if it be patience under injuries, behold Him standing meekly, while they buffeted, reviled, mocked, spat on Him; if it be love of thy brother who offends thee, think of Him stretching out His Hands upon the Cross, and embracing the whole world, and thee too with thy brother, in His love. There is no thought which has such power over the soul and over sin, as the thought of Jesus. Behold Him in thy soul, as thou hast seen Him here, pictured before thee[c]. Gaze on His meek Countenance, His Eye full of love resting on thee, the suffering of His Brow pierced for thee, and so ask Him for His love's sake, that thou mayest love Him, and be less unlike Him. And then be very watchful; watch with thy Lord, for a short time; summon thy whole strength to keep thyself wholly from every form of this one sin.

But you cannot know whether you fail or no, unless you examine yourself; and you will find that it costs you less time, less weariness, less irksomeness, and is more hopeful, to examine yourself twice or thrice, than once only at the end of the day. Thy meal times will give thee a break. There is some leisure before thy meal; to look back a few hours, two or three minutes will suffice. At the end of the

[c] A representation of the Crucifixion in the east window of the village Church of Pusey.

day, the whole day becomes one confused, colourless distance. Thou canst distinguish no objects in it. It is like looking back on a day's journey. If thou look back from time to time from some height, thou canst see spread out before thee what thou hast passed through. If thou wait to the end of the day, by no effort of thy mind canst thou bring back more than some two or three points which arrested thee. Thinkest thou this a hard thing? Even a heathen[d] advised to examine every morning on rising from bed, what thou wert about to do, of how much moment it is, not to give way to thy failings, and to renew this oftener than morning and evening.

Listen not to Satan, telling thee it is hard. It *is* hard, when thou beginnest. It *is* hard to resist sin; it *is* hard not to follow thine own will; it *is* hard to save thy soul; but it is harder far and unendurable to lose it and the sight of God. Thine own easy ways will become hard to thee; God will make hard ways easy.

Listen not again if Satan tells thee, when the hour comes: 'It is good, only not now; now I am tired, weary; I can remember nothing, think of nothing. How can I think of what I have said, thought, or done, through these hours?' Pray God to shew thee. Thou wilt most likely see but little at first. All things are done ill at first. Only pray God to forgive what thou seest. It will be a great gain, if thou hast truly seen and repented of but one thing. To have learned, in one day, with sorrow of heart for love of

[d] Galen de cognosc. curandisque animi morbis c. 5. 6.

Jesus, to look into thyself and bewail, not thy sinfulness only, but the sins of that day to Him, is the first and hardest step to eternal life. Pray to persevere, and all the rest will be easier. Thinkest thou that it will be toilsome to thee, so, day by day, to remove every speck of sin? What is it, then, which it is so wearisome to cleanse? A house which will again be defiled? a mirror which will again be clouded? a dress which shall again be soiled? or this poor outward form, which is one day to decay? These things thou thinkest it no hard thing to cleanse, day by day, or week by week. What is it then which it is so wearisome to look to, to cleanse? Is it something which concerns thee not, something for a time only, something for another? Truly it is for Another too. For it is for the All-Holy Trinity. It is, that thine own soul, thine own self, thy very inmost self, whom thou shouldest love, may be enlarged to contain God and the love of God; it is that the eyes of thy soul may be enlightened that they may see Him as He is, and more fully in whatever degree thou hast cleansed them here; it is that thy soul may be brightened to shine with the Brightness of God; that thy senses may desire nothing but what they have in that blessed-making Sight of God, and have what overwhelms all their desire, to be blessed in His Bliss, wise in His Wisdom, good in His Goodness, joyous in His Joy, full of God, yet stretching forth to God; all thine which is God's, save His Infinity, and that will be for thee too, for thou canst never reach the bounds of His Perfections and His Goodness.

And shall this too be for a time, my brethren? No? for ye shall be, if ye attain, eternal in His Eternity. Ye will not think it a hard thing again, my brethren, to prepare yourselves for such fulness of bliss. God grant that ye may, in some way, begin to-day. 'To-day' is ever 'the Day of Salvation.'

SERMON VII.

DISTRACTIONS IN PRAYER.

HEBREWS v. 7.

'Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him That was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared.'

SUCH is the pattern which He, Who is our Pattern, gives us of acceptable effectual prayer. He knew that He should be heard. 'I know,' He saith, 'that Thou hearest Me always[a],' when yet He had gone 'groaning in Himself' to the grave of Lazarus; and yet the more, because He should be heard, did He with intense suffering, with strong and mighty crying and tears, offer up His prayers and supplications. And 'He was heard in that He feared.' He knew, as God, that, as Man, He should be heard; yet as Man, He withdrew Himself from none of the sufferings of awe and earnest reverent dread, which attends impending, yet unaccomplished, trial; His Godhead sustained the sufferings of His Manhood, but superseded them not. This, too, was prophesied of Him: the Psalms which

[a] St. John xi. 42.

express the deepest agony of prayer, are those which shadow forth His prayers; which, while they were the prayers of those, who in old times offered them, of David and the rest of the suffering saints of God, had yet, in the Mind of the Holy Ghost, through Whom they prayed them, and vented their unutterable groanings, a deeper, intenser meaning, and so became of a twofold character; in part and on the surface they were their prayers in Him, Whose sufferings they dimly foreshadowed, and ours in Him our Head; in the deepest, fullest meaning, they are His, and are those of the Church now, only because in Him. What a picture, then, do they give of intense, suffering prayer! How do the strong crying and tears, of which the Apostle speaks, re-echo through them!

To view them as patterns of earnest prayer. In their words He clothed that unutterable agony, when, bearing the Father's wrath for us, He endured to be forsaken by the Father, and uttered that mysterious cry, the depths whereof none but Himself can ever (one must think) wholly understand, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Or again, to look on prayer only as suffering, since we think it much if it is not all joy; 'I am weary of My crying; My throat is dry; Mine eyes fail, while I wait for My God[b]:' 'By reason of My groaning, My bones cleave to My skin[c]:' as in the other Psalms, 'They tell all My bones;' or again, 'I have roared by reason of the disquietness of My heart. My groaning is not hid from Thee: My heart panteth, My strength faileth;

[b] Ps. lxix. 3. [c] Ib. cii. 5.

the light of Mine eyes, it also is gone from Me;' or of the continuance of the prayer, 'I have cried day and night unto Thee,' as we know He continued all night in prayer to God: yea, He says of Himself, 'I am prayer[d];' His very Being was one Prayer.

But the Psalms, in that they are adapted to us, are witnesses to us how we should pray; they have a lower sense, in which, imperfect as we are, we can still use them; while we should be tending upward toward that higher meaning in which they belong to Him in Whom we are.

Or to take again eminent types of Him; how strangely great was that mysterious action of the Patriarch Jacob, when he wrestled with the Angel until the break of day, and "[e] by his strength he had power with God; he wept, and made supplication unto Him; He found him in Bethel, and there He spake with us;' i.e. included us also in the blessing of Israel, if we are true children of Israel. Nay, we take to ourselves often the pattern of Jacob, and speak of his 'wrestlings' being realized now; again bearing witness to ourselves how fervent our prayers should be. Or again, how intense the prayer of Hannah, that even to Eli the priest, she seemed, from the excess of her silent emotion, like one beside herself with strong drink.

And yet with such patterns even under the Old Covenant, such models and words provided for us, our Lord Himself giving us both the pattern to pray, and the words to utter, and His Name wherein to

[d] Ps. cix. 4. [e] Hos. xii. 3, 4.

offer them, and His Spirit whereby to utter them, and Himself presenting our prayers, cleansed with His own Blood, what are our prayers? Heavy, for the most part, and earthly; often we are unwilling to begin them, readily falling in with some plea, why we should not pray now, readily ceasing. And well may we have no pleasure in prayers such as we too often offer. Unwilling to begin, distracted as we go on, glad to make an end, what a picture this of children coming to an All-bountiful and gracious Father, to have what they ask for! And yet is it not too true? How many prayers in any Church are uttered while the heart is far away! How many come hither, without thinking in earnest about praying at all, of the sermon rather than of the prayers! Or they will not come when prayer alone is offered, even if it be (as in this place[f]) those deep supplications of our Litany, which bring before our God all our manifold wants, in that contrite spirit, which may most hope to be heard. Or they think that they can pray of themselves, without any great effort, or any special aid of God: and these, of course, must fail to pray. Or of those who really desire to pray, how many have their minds so little controlled at other times, or so thronged with the things of this life, that the thoughts of the world pour in upon them, when they would pray; and when people come to themselves, they find that while their knees have remained bent, where they were, they themselves have been far away, in their counting-house or their shop,

[f] Preached where the Sermon was in the afternoon Service.

their cards or their society, talking or acting, competing with a neighbour, or disputing; advancing or aggrandizing themselves, it may be, while in posture they were remaining humble before God; or resenting a fancied injury, while they were praying forgiveness of their sins; busied about the things of time and sense, while, by coming before God at all, they were professing that what alone concerns them is Eternity. Would they could have been so long away! but '[g] whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?' Rather, we have been there in the presence of God, under His Eye, by our own act inviting that Eye, Which is ever upon us, to regard us; and then in His temple, our mind, setting up our idols, '[h] every man in the chamber of his imagery,' and offering incense to them. 'Go in,' saith God to His prophet, 'and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.' 'So I went in and saw; and beheld every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about.' It is shocking and hideous to ourselves, to think what thoughts have been present with us, when we and they together were in the very Presence of God; and self was in some way the idol which we were worshipping, when we were making the show of serving God. And if so to us, whose faculties have been deadened by our sins and our evil habits, what must we have been in His sight! How again, in another and a better sort, will the very words of the prayers which they are

[g] Ps. cxxxix. 7. [h] Ezek. viii. 12.

using, carry their minds off to some train of thought, and they find that the prayers have been going on without them, and they have perhaps been following the words with their eyes, thinking about the words in their prayer, or about the prayer, rather than offering it; speculating about the things of God, instead of praying to Him, as if the things of God were subjects only to occupy their thoughts, and they themselves were not there before Him, sinners, to ask forgiveness of our sins; criminals, to ask our Judge not to pass sentence upon us; guilty of His law and of its penalties, and praying not to be cast for ever into Hell. So that persons have been even afraid at the end to pray God to 'grant effectually' what they have 'asked faithfully,' fearing lest they have asked little or nothing 'faithfully,' and they bring a curse upon themselves and not a blessing; or to say to God, 'Who hast given us grace with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee,' fearing that they have not had that grace given unto them, or if so—which is worse—have received it in vain.

And if this be so with those who come to Church, what must be the case with those who are openly profane and come not, or come carelessly and irregularly? For since all prayer depends on His aid, Who 'poureth out the Spirit of prayer and supplication,' that 'Spirit Who maketh intercession for us,' how can they expect that God will bestow It upon them morning and evening, who at other times despise His Ordinances, or who, going to the business of the day, utter hurriedly a prayer, to satisfy their con-

sciences rather than to obtain what they ask for, not because time is not allowed them for more, but because they will not make it? Not that it is not better to pray in any way almost, than not to pray at all; to pray more than to pray less. All neglect of devotion is open neglect of God and independence of Him; and so any prayer, however imperfect, or however little it have of the character of prayer, is better than neglect of prayer altogether, since it does retain some dependence upon God, which they who pray not at all cast aside. Alas! If we be such at our best, what must we be at our worst? If we be such, when we should be most awed, what must we be, when most unrestrained? If we be such, when by our own act we have confessed ourselves in God's immediate Presence, and must, if at any time, be most conscious of it, what when we are professedly amid the things of the world, and employed about them? If they thus engage us, when removed from them to another world, what when our very thoughts are on this?

Yet, miserable as this is, there is no way at once to be free. Slowly, year by year, and day by day, did we bring this hard bondage upon ourselves, and slowly only may we hope that it will be removed from off our necks. Yet the way in which we brought it upon ourselves, may show us the way in which we may hope to have it lightened. And praised be God, it is lightened, though not at once, yet in some measure, when we in earnest wish it; at least, some foretaste is given us, that it will be lightened. If we be yet in darkness, some gleams of light break

through; though we see not the Sun, nor where He is, even beneath the clouds it is lighter around us. Some prayers are from the first given us more free; some liftings up of the heart to God, which before we knew of; some hidden 'drawings,' as we hope, 'of the Father,' which seem like beams of His countenance, and make us feel lighter and gladsome; something which, being unlike any thing of this earth, we trust is of Heaven.

But, while we have gracious undeserved encouragements to persevere, the steps must be slow. Step by step, we sunk amid the distractions of the world, and step by step only may we hope that our Father will raise us out of the mire wherein we plunged ourselves. But our first step, the very beginning and condition of our restoration, is to unlearn the distractions whereby we have been beset. In seeking to remedy our distractions, our first labour must be to amend ourselves. Such as we are at other times, such will our prayers be. God helps us in our prayers, as without Him we cannot pray; but He doth so in proportion as we admit His aid in the rest of our life. We cannot pray as we ought, unless we live as we ought. Our prayers will partake of our other infirmities. We cannot at once collect ourselves, and become other men in the Presence of God, from what we were just before. If we are in earnest, we are, of course, in a higher state when we place ourselves consciously in the Presence of Almighty God; we must become, in a degree, awed, subdued, respectful; we are on our knees; and the unwonted attitude

tells people they are on a business other than that of this life; they have been accustomed so to ask of God, since in their purified and unstained infancy they knelt by their mother's knees; and they feel that if they ask not, then the time for obtaining what they are there to ask will be past; when they rise, a duty will have been done or left undone; yet, though raised for the time above their ordinary selves, they are themselves still. The Pharisee was less proud than at other times, in that he thanked God for what he was; he acknowledged it was His gift, but he was proud still. A person cannot be full of cares, and riches, and pleasures, and enjoyments, and vanities of this life, up to the very moment when he falls down at God's footstool, and leave these companions of his other hours behind him, so that they will not trust themselves in with him into the Holy Presence. '[1]A dream cometh through the multitude of business;' and whoso has his thoughts at other times thronged with the manifold concerns of this life, must needs be in a confused dreamy state, when he appears before God. We are only to a certain degree in our own power; we have it in our own power, by the covenanted help of God, to do, one by one, the single acts, by which we become what we are; and having neglected that help, we still, by His undeserved mercy, have it in our power, slowly by repentance to undo what we have become, so long as the same grace is continued to us. But we have not, at any given time, the power to act contrary to the habits we have formed and are continually forming:

[1] Eccl. v. 3.

by our own act we became such; but we cannot at once help (and it is a very awful thing) the very evil, from which but for our own fault we might have been free. We cannot keep our thoughts disengaged at prayer, if they are through the day engaged; we cannot keep out vain thoughts then, if at other times we yield to them. The thoughts, to which we have been accustomed during the day, rush in upon us before we are aware, and carry us away. They master us then, because we have yielded to them before; they bind us, as lawful captives, because we have before sold ourselves to them, and taken their wages and their yoke, and have delivered ourselves into their hands. We must live more to God, if we would pray more to God; we must be less engrossed with the world, if we would not have the world thrust itself in upon our prayers and stifle them. He who lives to the world, and he who lives to God, must do mostly the same things; but with the one, the things themselves are the end; with the other, to please God in them. If a duty, to be performed well, must for the time needs take up wellnigh all our thoughts, yet is there to the holy, all the while, a consciousness of the Presence of God, as the unseen Light of his life, just as in this bodily world we may have our eyes fixed on some object of sense, yet we are conscious of the presence of the light of the world. We need not fear lest our duties should be done less thoroughly, if done more calmly, and not for their own sakes but for God's. Rather, in that they are done in God, they will be done more as God wills;

self and the wrong bias of our minds will be removed; they will be done truly and rightly, since they will be 'wrought in God,' Who is Truth and Right.

This, then, is the chief, the most comprehensive remedy against distraction in prayer, to see that we be not distracted amid the manifoldness of the things of sense, at other times; that we make not any thing in this world our end, that we seek not our happiness in it, follow it not eagerly, be not passionately fond of any thing; else we make it our god, and what we have allowed ourselves to be captivated with, i. e. held captive by, will hold our thoughts captive in our prayers too, and bind them down to itself, and will not let them soar freely to our God. We must make our choice. If we *will* be anxious about worldly things, we cannot pray as we ought, though we would.

But still further, even when we would serve God, or do our duty in this life, we must see that we do our very duties calmly. There is a religious, as well as a worldly, distraction. We may mix up self in doing duty, as well as when we make self our end. Religious excitement, or excitement about things of religion, may as effectually bar our praying as eagerness about worldly things. We may be engaged about the things of God, yet our mind may all the while centre in these things, not in God. Sad as it is, people may be engaged in the progress of religion or of truth, (it is shocking to say it, yet worse that people should fall into it unwarned,) much as persons looking on a game or engaged in one; nay, the temptation is the greater, in that the interests are the

more absorbing, and persons themselves are more off their guard, because the subject and the cause are in themselves holy, and it is good to be interested in them, only in a right way. We may be diligent about the duties of our calling, and yet find our pleasure and our reward simply in our success or ingenuity in doing them dexterously. Nay, there is no more frequent snare than doing *what* we ought, but not *as* we ought; putting worldly activity in place of religious diligence. Thus people, in providing for their families, which is a duty, become worldly. In serving the state, which may be a duty, they become ambitious; in doing well what they have to do (which they ought,) they become vain; in some way putting self in the place of God. Whatever then be our employment, doing the duty of our callings, or seeking to promote God's truth, or doing good to man, or to prepare, if it may be, for the coming of His kingdom, as citizens or as members of the Church, we must see that we do it soberly, labouring to have our minds fixed, not on the things themselves, but on God, that we look through them to Him for Whom we do them. If our mind be in a whirl, hearing, thinking, speaking, about many things, it matters not whether they relate to the world or the Church, it will be dizzy and distracted, i.e., torn asunder among them when we come to our prayer; and we shall not be able to fix it. If we will be busied and careful about many things, we cannot do the one thing needful, sit at Jesus' feet and hear His words. And hence Holy Scripture joins these two together, calmness or sobriety and prayer; 'Be ye therefore sober, and

watch unto prayer[k].' '[l]Let your *moderation* be known unto all men. Be anxious for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God ... shall guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.' Peace is the beginning and end of prayer; its condition and its reward. Resign yourselves, that ye may pray, and God will guard your thoughts, and hold them to Himself.

If, also, you would guard against wandering in prayer, you must practise yourself in keeping a check upon your thoughts at other times. If, as Scripture saith of the fool, our 'eyes are in the ends of the earth,' if we let our senses wander after every thing which presents itself to them, we are forming in ourselves a habit of distraction, which will oppress us in our prayers too. It is not a light matter that we be gazing on every thing which we can see, that we listen to all we may hear, that we keep all the avenues of our senses open, and let what will enter in. Rather Holy Scripture so often says, 'They lift up their eyes,' as if we should not for ever be gazing around us, but keep them rather staid, until we need them. The compass of our mind is narrow at best, and cannot hold many things; one thing thrusts out another; and if we admit these manifold things into our mind, we shall have small room for its true and rightful Owner and Inmate, God. If we let thoughts chase each other through our minds at will, they will find their accustomed entrance

[k] 1 St. Pet. iv. 7. [l] Phil. iv. 5.

there in our prayers too; if we close not the doors of our minds against them at other times, they will stand wide open then. In this busy age, in which every one would know about every thing, and, like the Athenians, our occupation seems to be to know some new thing, and what conveys news is thought the instrument of knowledge, and knowledge of every sort is thought a good, it is not a light matter, but one to which we must take great heed; what we hear, and admit into our minds. Our minds are holy things; they are the temples of God; and so, for His honour's sake Who has so hallowed them, we should be on our guard what we allow to enter there. We are commanded to beware of idle-speaking; beware we also of things, which foster it, idle-hearing and idle-seeing, and knowledge of idle things. As life draws towards its close, God dulls our eyes and ears and all our senses, that, being thus shut out from the outer world, our minds may the more retire from the world, withdraw into their own sanctuary, and there be occupied with Him, and prepare to meet Him. Be this method of His Providence a guide to us. Keep the rein over your own minds; control them; master them; check them, for the very sake of keeping them in check; so shall you the better have them in your power in your prayers too. Be not curious about things which concern you not, what happens in the street, or passes by you, or befals a neighbour, unless charity require it of you. These things waste the mind more than you can well think. Rather recollect that your concern

is not with the world; your home, your hopes, your abiding-place, is not here, but in God; your citizenship is not on earth, but in the Heavens; your places here shall shortly know you no more; the earth shall contain no more of you than the dust of your bodies, in keeping for you against the Resurrection. Why then so curious about what is nothing to you? Why, alas, but because the mind must be filled with something, and unless it be filled with God, it must deaden its cravings with the nothingnesses of this life? But, on that very ground, if it be so filled, it empties itself of God, and, being void of God, cannot pray to God, since prayer is the voice of God within us to Himself.

Then, on the other hand, as we seek, during the day, to weaken the hold which the world has upon us and our thoughts, so must we, by His grace, to strengthen our own capacity of turning to God. Away from the world and to God! To prevent the world having the mastery over you in your prayers, seek that the world be to you penetrated with God, speak to you of God. 'Whether ye eat or whether ye drink,' says Holy Scripture, 'or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him[m].' Labour that, whatever ye do, no matter how small and trivial, ye do as He wills and because He wills it. Commit to Him thoughts, words, and works, to be 'ordered by His governance, to do

[m] Col. iii. 17.

that is righteous in His sight;' to be 'begun, continued, and ended' in Him. Speak or refrain from speaking, eat or eat not, drink or drink not, labour or rest, with a view to Him, having Him in your eye, seeking aid from Him to do whatever you do, aright. Thank Him if you have ease or joy; resign yourself to Him, if you have sorrow or pain; seek to Him, if you have temptation; ask His guidance, if in perplexity; make it an end with you, to have Him in all your thoughts. So when you come to your fuller and more set devotions, you may hope that He, Whom you serve continually, will keep you then also, and will vouchsafe Himself to visit you, and be in your thoughts, which you would fain make His, and will shut out the world by filling your thoughts with Himself.

It is the infrequency of prayer which makes prayer so difficult. It is not a great effort now and then, which makes the things even of this life easy to us; it is their being the habit of our bodies or our minds. It was by continued exercise which we were not aware of, that our bodies, as children, were strengthened; it was by continued practice that we learnt any thing. By continued gazing at far-off objects, the eye sees further than others; by continued practice, the hand becomes steadied and obeys the motions of our mind. So and much more must the mind, by continual exercise, be steadied, to fix itself on Him Whom it cannot grasp, and look up to Him Whom it cannot see. Yea, so much the more exceedingly must it with strong effort fix itself by

His grace on Him, because we cannot see Him or approach to Him, but by His revealing Himself and coming down to us, and giving us eyes to see and hearts to comprehend; and this He will do only to the earnest and persevering, and to us severally, as we are such. They then will pray best, who, praying truly, pray oftenest. Prayer is a being with God. A Christian's life is a continual prayer. He who is with God most at other times, will be most with Him then; he whose thoughts most rise to God amid his daily business, will find them rise most easily to Him, when prayer itself becomes his business. And this was part of the wisdom of the Ancient Church, in fixing certain hours for briefer prayers during the day,—nine, twelve, three, the hours of the descent of the Holy Ghost, the crucifixion of our Lord, His precious Death,—not only to fix saving truths in our mind, and multiply prayer, but also to carry us on through the day in prayer, that so we might live more in and on prayer, i.e. in and on God, and pray to Him more heartily at the times of fuller prayer, and have Him more in our hearts, as not having had our thoughts during the day estranged from Him. This, also, is one great blessing of the practice of ejaculatory prayer, that is, prayer which is darted up from the mind in the little intervals which occur, whatever we are doing. Nothing goes on without breaks, to leave us space to turn to God. Amid conversation there is silence; in the busiest life there are moments, if we would mark them, when we must remain idle. We are

kept waiting, or we must hear what is wearisome; let prayer take the place of impatience. In preparing for business, let prayer take the place of eagerness; in closing it, of self-satisfaction. Are we weary? be it our refreshment! Are we strong? let us hallow our strength by thanksgiving! The very preparation or close of any business brings with it of necessity a pause, teaching us by this very respite to begin and end with prayer; with prayer beforehand for His help, or at the end thanksgiving to Him Who carried us through it, or for pardon for what has been amiss in it. Nay, our ordinary duties for the most part may go on mechanically, without much attention on our part. We find that we can converse amidst them, discuss the concerns of our neighbours or what relates not to ourselves amidst them without hindrance. Why not what alone concerns us, seek our peace with God and His mercy, His help and salvation? We are formed to be unable to continue long any exertion of body or mind without breathing-space; we must pause and take breath to begin afresh; why not breathe to and in Him, Who is the Breath of our life, and rest in Him Who is the Rest of the weary? People can sing during their work, and feel themselves refreshed by it; why not 'one of the songs of Zion'? In so many ways would God teach us not to be engrossed with the duties and business of this life, but amid all to find a place for thoughts of Him, and of our endless life with Him in heaven, or, if without Him, in hell. He Himself commands, 'Thou shalt

talk of them, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.' He has His own in every station of life, whose bodies perhaps are busied about the meanest occupations, but their thoughts are on Him, the Most High. The body has been sweeping the streets, the soul aloft among the golden streets of our heavenly Jerusalem, and with the Lamb Who lighteneth it[n].

Such are some of the more distant preparations for prayer, such as it should be, fixed and earnest; to strive to make God, not the world, the end of our lives; not to be taken up even with our duties in the world, but amid them to seek Him; to subdue self, and put a restraint upon our senses at other times, that we may have the control over them then; to lift our thoughts to Him at other times, so will they rise more readily then.

These are, in their very nature, slowly learnt. Yet as, if wholly learnt, it were Heaven itself, so is each step a step Heavenwards. Each wish to pray is a breath from Heaven, to strengthen and refresh us; each act of faith, done to amend our prayers, is wrought in us by Him, and draws us to Him, and His gracious look on us. Each amends our prayers, and our amended prayers are His gift to amend our lives, and so we may go on, in slow, it may be, through our

[n] A man employed in sweeping the street was overheard speaking to his fellow, out of the latter chapters of the Revelation, which he had learnt, of 'the streets of pure gold.' 'What comfort could I have,' he said, 'but in thinking of them?'

manifold infirmities, yet ceaseless progress, until we find in His gracious and merciful Presence the end of our prayers, our faith, our hopes, our lives.

Yet there are many more immediate helps, at the very time of prayer, of which I may mention some few, if so be some may find herein what may be of use to them. Neglect nothing which can produce reverence. Pass not at once from the things of this world to prayer, but collect thyself. Think what thou art, what God is; thyself a child, and God thy Father; but also thyself dust and ashes, God, a consuming fire, before Whom angels hide their faces: thyself unholy, God holy; thyself a sinner, God thy Judge. And to this it will help, before you first pray, reverently to repeat your Belief, as confessing before God all He has wrought for you, and His own Majesty; or as they did of old, to think of the last four things, Death Judgement, Heaven, Hell; what thou hopest, everlasting life; what thou fearest, unceasing misery; what thou needest, God's pardoning, preventing, assisting, perfecting grace, to save thee from the one, and along a strait and narrow path to guide thee to the other; nay further yet, God's help, that thou mayest fear the one and hope for the other; for the very power to dread hell, or to hope for Heaven, is itself a great gift of God. Then forget not, that of thyself thou canst not pray. Without His softening grace Heaven and hell might stand before us, and we could not pray. There have been, who have seen hell before them, clear as any object of man's sight, and could not pray. We come before Him, as helpless

creatures, who need to be taught what to ask for, and knowing, to be enabled to ask, and asking, to be enabled to persevere to ask. If we think we can pray of ourselves, we cannot pray. Then, as it should be among our last prayers at night, that God should be in our waking thoughts, and that, when we wake up, we should be with God, so we should be very watchful how we allow the things of the world to enter into our minds, before our first prayers. We wake morning by morning to a new life. The cares and thoughts of yesterday have been buried in our sleep; the world around us is still hushed; the turmoil of life is not yet come back to haunt us. We should deal reverently then with our first thoughts, beware how we awaken in ourselves any of the trains of plans, or business, or occupations, which take up our day. They are yet at a distance from us, and we have more power over them. Stop their first inroad. Turn from them resolutely to God, before one thought have awakened its fellow; that so thou mayest secure undisturbed thy first prayers, wherein thou committest thy whole self, soul, body, spirit, for the day to God. Then watch thyself, what helps or hinders thee to fix thy mind on God. At times, the mind pours itself out to God, when closing the eyes on the outward world, it fixes itself directly upon God. At times, it prays best, by rivetting the eyes on the words of its prayer, making the very senses, which would distract us, the means of fixing the yet more wandering mind itself. At times, we pray best silently; at times, the hearing of the sound of our own prayer impresses it on the

mind. If we fail in one way, we should betake ourselves to another, and so God, seeing us in earnest, will the rather have mercy upon us. Then as to the words of our prayer; we should beware how we pass hastily over any of our prayers. It is not how much we say, but what we pray, which is of real moment. If we are not really masters of our own time, it were better to say but a portion of our prayers, resolving to use what after-time we can find for the rest, than to crowd in more than we can pray aright. It is better to delay some, than, by hurrying, to risk the loss of all; but better still, to pray God to waken us at the time of prayer, and ourselves rise that we may have time. Then, the best models of prayer consist of brief petitions, as suited to men in need; for when they really feel their need, they use not many words. 'Lord, save us, we perish,' is the cry of need. And so the petitions of the pattern of all prayer, our Lord's, are very short, but each containing manifold prayers. So are the Psalms in prayer or praise; 'blot out all mine iniquities,' 'create in me a new heart,' 'cast me not away from Thy Presence,' 'save me by Thy Name.' Such are our own primitive prayers; collects, litany, sentences, asking much in few words. Even our longest prayer 'for the Church Militant' is made up in fact of a number of separate prayers. Of our private devotions, such is that of one called 'a Saint in his closet,' Bp. Andrewes. In this way we may collect our strength and attention for each petition, and so pray on, step by step, through the whole, resting at each step on Him Who alone can carry us to the end,

and if, by human frailty, we be distracted, sum up briefly with one strong concentrated effort what we have lost by wandering.

In public prayer, the case is different. For here, if we wander, the prayers meanwhile go on, and we find that we have lost a portion of our daily bread; that God's Church on earth has been praising with Angels and Archangels and the Church in Heaven, while we have been bringing our sheep and our oxen and our money-changing, the things of this life, into God's Presence, and the Court of Heaven. Yet the remedies are the same, and we have even greater helps. For here, if we would but strive to bring it home to ourselves, is God's more immediate Presence, in the house which is called by His Name; here are the holy Angels with their 'golden censers' 'offering the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne[o]'; here especially is He, Who promised to be 'in the midst, where two or three are gathered together in His Name.' The majesty of the place may well awe us into devotion, and will aid us to it, if we waste not its impressiveness by our negligence or frivolity; if we demean ourselves here as in God's Presence, enter it and leave it reverently, not exchanging worldly compliments, but acting as though we saw His Eye on us. Then also for ourselves, recollect we, that our Lord's-Day services, as our days, are numbered. To most of us, they are our chief and fullest devotions of this life, and so our chief preparation for the endless worship of Heaven; they are

[o] Rev. viii. 3.

means of gathering strength for our six days of toil, of knitting on week to week in one holy company, of hallowing our week to God with Whom we begin. But they are also beginnings of the employment of Heaven, which they shadow forth. We here faintly practise the first imperfect notes of that endless song, which is to sound on for ever. At most, we have but few of them; a few fifties of these days of rest over, and we must have gained our endless rest or missed it. A few fifties of these solemn services, and we must have closed all the confessions, cries for mercy, prayers, tears, which shall avail then: the door will be shut to for us, and we admitted or shut out for ever. We know not what we do when we waste one of them; and so we should enter this holy place, impressing on ourselves, that we have herein a treasure offered us, of which but few more are in store for us, and which, if wasted, is lost for ever. Come we then calmly to this holy place, not thinking or speaking, up to its very threshold, of things of earth, but as men bent on a great service, where much is at stake; coming to a Holy Presence, from Whom depends our all. Pray we, as we enter it, that God would guard our thoughts and compose our minds and fix them on Him. Employ we any leisure before the service begins, in thought or private prayer; guard we our eyes from straying to those around us; listen we reverently to His holy word; use the pause before each prayer to ask God to enable us to pray this prayer also; and so pray each separate prayer, as far as we can, relying on His gracious aid; beware we, how we let the mind relax,

as though some prayers—those which God has especially commanded, for kings and those in authority —were of less importance to us. For this has often been the first inlet and occasion of distraction ; and yet God has especially enjoined these prayers, and He has annexed a blessing to them, 'that we may lead a peaceable and godly life.' Ills, which people so readily complain of in governments, may be the punishment of their own coldness in these prayers, which are an act of dutiful charity, since kings are for our sakes exposed to especial dangers and trials which we are freed from. Strive we to pray, as we should serve God, with all our heart and all our mind; and He will graciously help our infirmities, and accept our longings, and hear, we may even hope, what we longed to pray for, but failed. If we have wandered, let us, as soon as we perceive it, collect ourselves with all our might ; and when the 'Amen' comes, let us seek to gather into one the petitions of the prayer, and crave, by a hearty assent, to be allowed to join in that which by our own frailty we have missed. Prayer for pardon should close all our prayers, and if, when we return home, we could find some intervals for praying anew the substance of prayers, which in public we missed, God would doubtless join us on with His faithful worshippers. He will look favourably on our earnestness, and strengthen us for the future.

Yet we are not to think that by these or any other remedies distraction is to be cured at once. We cannot undo at once the habit, it may be, of years. We must be content to drag with us the chain of our

former sins; thankful that God in any degree lightens it and enables us to hold on in our course. Distraction has distressed eminent saints; how much more such as we! Only it is likely that they were more shocked by one worldly thought intruding upon the Holy Presence, than we by many. Distraction will come through weakness, ill-health, fatigue: only pray, guard, strive, against it; humble yourselves under it, and for the past negligences, of which it is mostly the sad fruit; rely less upon yourself, cast yourself more upon God, hang more wholly upon Him, and long the more for that blessed time, when the redeemed of the Lord shall serve Him day and night without distraction.

So may the distractions, the fruits of our former infirmities, or messengers wherewith Satan, for our sins, is permitted to buffet us, turn the rather to our salvation. God needeth not our weak prayers, as neither doth He need us. He 'knoweth our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking'; He will give us, we trust, 'what for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask,' if we seek of Him to heal us for His worthiness, and give sight to our blindness. It is we, who need to hang on Him, as by our imperfect prayers we do, and by doing, learn to do; and this we may learn to do, out of our very miseries; not looking upon them as though necessary evils, but as withdrawals of God's grace, that we may seek that grace more lowlily; ashamed and confounded that we cannot pray, and so confessing our confusion and shame and transgressions, that He may forgive us

the iniquity of our sin; ashamed that we are so little sons, as approaching our Father with so little love, and so returning as repentant prodigals, whom, though a great way off, our merciful Father will own; ashamed that we have not 'the offering of a free heart to give,' and cannot 'praise His Name, because it is so comfortable,' and so offering to Him 'a broken and contrite heart, which He will not despise.'

So, confessing our misery and shame and sin, may He clothe us all with the garb best fitted to our state, the clothing of humility, and when He hath by death unclothed us of sin and frailty and mortality, clothe us anew at the last day with that His 'best robe' of immortality, even Him, Whom we put on in Baptism, and in Whom, frail as we are, we trust to be found abiding, 'our iniquities blotted out, and our sin covered.'

SERMON VIII.

REVIEW OF LIFE.

Ps. cxix. 59, 60.

'I thought on my ways and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies; I made haste and delayed not to keep Thy commandments.'

Such is the history of almost all solid conversion. The great destroyer of the souls of men, which throughout the whole world is so widely wasting, is not so much wilful, deliberate sin, as thoughtlessness. Ripened sinfulness alone is deliberate, with forethought. Most sinners are plunged into sin unawares. Even habitual sinners are 'overtaken,' as they say, again and again. They are walking at random, with no guard over their senses, no heed to their companions, not looking to their steps, and sin comes upon them, and ere they know it, has the mastery over them. They flee not occasions of sin; they trust themselves very near it; Satan, unseen, drives them on; the place whereon they stand is slippery, they fall in. They know not themselves, nor the strength of temptation, nor the deceitfulness of Satan, nor their own weakness, nor the strength and help of God; and, while they think they stand, they are

fallen. The last act is very seldom in a person's own power. No one, hardly, purposes to be drunken; few in their first fall, perhaps for many, mean to be wholly impure. And yet any one would say, that it was a very miracle of grace, if one, on the verge of deadly sin, were stopped and saved.

To sin with forethought is with a high hand to part with the very principle of good, to defy the Majesty of God, and to dare His Almightiness. We should rightly think it a very heavy increase of sin, were any to do it with full forethought and consciousness. We speak of such acts as of unwonted malignity. Deliberate murder makes the blood run cold. Almost all, bad as they might themselves be, think that any who could plan to destroy or lead astray female purity, had a beast's heart and a beast's nature, not man's. Wilful drunkenness would be a revolting extreme of sottishness. No one could come at once to purposed deadly sin. It is not, then, plea enough even before ourselves (bribed and drugged as people's consciences often are), that the deadly sin was not planned beforehand. Ye may have pleaded this too often for yourselves; when the case is not your own, ye see that the plea will not stand.

Forethought heightens the sin; so much so, that of many sins persons could not bring themselves to think beforehand. They will even blind themselves, resolve not to see, will not look in the face what they are about to do, lest they should not dare to do it, if they saw it. They will not think that they are about to do it, they will persuade themselves that

they are not, they will look away from it, until they are close upon it, and then it is done. Nay, they will again and again begin on the course which ever ends in it, and think they will stop short this time, though they never did before; or they will think of something short of it, in order not to think of the sin itself. Thus, a young person tempted to lie, will resolve not to think whether it will lie or no, until the very moment, that the lie may be told without steadily thinking on it. People go to rest prayerless again and again, thinking they may say their prayers, without the effort or solemn act of kneeling, although they know how often they have thus fallen asleep, with scarce one thought of asking pardon, or of God's Fatherly care. They will put off duties, although they know that this always ends in their not doing them, because they will not do them, yet dare not say, 'I will not.' They say, 'I go, Sir[a],' and go not.

Or, they will hurry to their sin, as even Judas did to that last sin, which filled up the measure of his wickedness. 'He went immediately out,' the Gospel says, 'and it was night[b].' He could not bear to stay in the presence of his Master, Whom he would betray. To stay was to be drawn back. So he burst at once the bonds of love, whereby his Lord would have held him, and 'went out.' And sinners now go forth quickly out of themselves, that they may escape the presence of God within them, rebuking them. They will sin hastily, impetuously, in order to avoid

[a] St. Matt. xxi. 30. [b] St. John xiii. 30.

the struggle of conscience. They will not part with their purpose; yet, till they are quite hardened, it is a pain to sin against their good God and Father; and so they will not take time to think what they are doing, because it is a torture to think that they are about to do evil, and yet to do it. 'It was night,' when Judas went out to betray his good Master. He could not bear to look on his deed. Many sins are wrought by night, that people may hide themselves from themselves yet more than from others. So rare, at least until the heart is seared, and hardened, and inured to sin, is conscious, full, wilful sin! It is the very business of sinners to forget themselves, and drown their memory. They hate to be by themselves, lest silence and stillness should force thought, and thought should reveal to them that fearful sight, themselves. Any thing better than to be alone! for to be alone is to be brought before themselves. Any toil or weariness, or wearisome society, sooner than to be left alone! lest, when all is hushed, thought should awake, and God speak through it, and they be forced to hear.

Such wilful ignorance of self is indeed real knowledge. To close one's own eyes against the light, is to see that, against which men shut them. It is no excuse before God; yea, it is man's very condemnation, that he *will* not see, *will* not hear, *will* not hearken, *will* not understand, 'lest he should be converted, and God should heal him[c].' Yet it shews how sorely sin is against the remains of God's Image in us and

[c] Acts xxviii. 27.

His pleadings in our consciences and the graces of His Spirit, that even practised sinners find it hard to sin with their eyes fully open, until, when quite hardened, they glory in it. While man yet feels sin to be an evil, he shrinks from thinking of it, or that he will do it, or has done it; until he is quite blinded, and puts good for evil and evil for good, and accounts God's law an evil, his own passions a good or his god. Until then, even habitual sinners blind, deafen, make pleas to, cozen themselves, that what they do is not sin, until they have done it; and then, they strive to forget it.

Since, then, persons come so slowly to full deliberate sin, what is the parent of this mass of sins wherewith we are encompassed? what is it which, day by day, is destroying souls? Thoughtlessness. At first, sinners do not think; then, they will not think: at last, they cannot think. 'Let us drive away care, drown care' is the invitation of sinners to one another, that they may forget themselves and God, and steep themselves in forgetfulness. The world invites them out of themselves; Satan shews them, in his mirror, glories, beauties, enjoyments, for a long time to come; he goes before them, and his flock, 'the flock of the slaughter[d],' follow him; he is merry with them, applauds them, echoes their laugh, heightens their feasts, inflames them, makes the wine sparkle and give its colour aright, dances before them, until, in mirth and revelry and forgetfulness of self, they dance after him

[d] Zech. xi. 4; Ps. xlix. 14.

to the brink of Hell. 'The harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe and wine are in their feasts,' says the prophet Isaiah; but what follows? 'they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of His Hands[e].' 'The voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers, shall no more be heard in her[f],' is part of the woe on that great city, the city of the world, Babylon; the revelry whereby the world deadens the soul and would drown the Voice of God. And what is the last end of the world, when 'like a snare it shall come upon the face of the whole world[g]?' We know that in the last days 'perilous times shall come,' and 'iniquity shall abound,' and men shall be 'lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of the good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God[h].' Yet our Lord, in foretelling the Day of Judgment, does not mark out any of these, or even any open sins. He warns us against that one sin which shall run through all the rest, 'thoughtlessness'; thought (that is) of the things of this life, thoughtlessness of Him their Maker, and of the end of their being, and wherein it should end, in heaven or in hell. 'As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it also be in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank; they married wives, they were given in marriage; until the day when Noe entered into

[e] Isa. v. 12. [f] Rev. xviii. 22.
[g] St. Luke xxi. 35. [h] St. Matt. xxiv. 12; 2 Tim. iii. 1—4.

the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also, as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank; they bought, they sold; they planted, they builded[i];' things of every day, which needs must be every day, yet all, things of time and sense, which men might perform as God wills, but wherein they do forget eternity and God.

This is the history of most of mankind; a thoughtless childhood, careless youth, too thoughtful manhood; one half of life without thought, the other with misplaced thought; thoughtful of things of time and sense, thoughtless of Him Who made them and of their real selves. What does almost every countenance we see in this vast thronging city, rude or refined, express, but thoughtlessness or a wrong thoughtfulness, a vacant, self-enjoying look, or carefulness about things of this life? So rare is thoughtfulness, that if any look thoughtful, men think he must have some sorrow. To be what Scripture calls 'grave,' is to have some hidden anxiety or grief. To be a 'serious' person is a name of reproach. To be careful about the soul, is to be fain to be better than others. 'Man walketh to and fro in a vain show[k],' an image, shadow, sporting himself with, following after, grasping at, shadows, and himself becoming like them; bearing about him the image of things Divine, himself the image of God, yet by his own acts encrusting and covering over and burying that image in mire and clay, or wearing it off

[i] St. Luke xviii. 26—28.

[k] Ps. xxxix. 6.

line by line, until there remain only what shall mark him as a deserter, not what shall be owned by Him Who placed it on him.

We speak of childhood as a thoughtless age. Wherein is its thoughtlessness shewn? They are readily amused by whatever comes before them, live in the present, forget the past, fear not and take no thought for the future; they fear not danger although close to them; they think nothing will hurt them which pleases them; they exchange readily one enjoyment for another, and hope that to-morrow will be as glad as to-day, and gladder. Wherein does this their thoughtlessness differ from that of most of their elders, except in innocence and purity, and simplicity, and ready forgetfulness of wrong? What is all their thoughtlessness but what is daily and hourly repeated by their elders? Or do *they* think less of the morrow of this life, than their elders of the one morrow which knows no morrow, the morrow of eternity? Are they more intent on their toys than their elders on toys as vain and empty, yet less innocent? Are they less thoughtless as to present danger than their elders as to the ever-present danger of hell? *They* will be warned not to take what hurts the body. Prophets, Apostles, Ministers of Christ, our Blessed Lord Himself in His Bodily Presence, His Sufferings, His Deeds of Love, His Words, the pleadings of His Spirit, have and do warn their elders in vain. Wherein are children thoughtless, and their elders not so, more deadlily?

What is the life of most men, even when free from

overt, deadly, sin? What is it, even if they are in some degree engaged in works of their calling, in things in which they might please God, and, through the Blood of their Redeemer, gain Heaven? How very few are they who, in the morning, ever set steadily before themselves the temptations, duties, of the day; in what things they most often fail; wherein they can amend; and form one earnest purpose to give themselves during the day to God, and shape the actions of the day as shall please Him! How very few enter upon any of their every-day trials (however often they may have failed) with prayer to God for help! How few with any preparation at all! How few even know what some of their chieftest trials are! How few know, except in some half way, that they have even failed at all! Almost every command of God is broken, almost every deadly sin is committed, people are covetous, luxurious, slothful, envious, proud, angry, gluttonous; they speak ill of others, or against them, irreverently, vainly; and know not that they have done so. What is almost all conversation almost everywhere, but a breach of the law of love, so that if a person would escape sin, he can hardly speak of all the world speaks of? And yet scarce any even doubt whether they are sinning! Act follows on act, word on word, chasing one another, sweeping over one another, like wave on wave; and what remains in the memory? How few call themselves really, evening by evening, to any account! It were not too much to say that many or most know more of the state of others' souls than of their own, and

care more to know it, 'curious to know the lives of others, slothful to amend their own[1].'

Yet what should you think, brethren, of one who left his house or anything he *does* value, as unguarded as men are daily content to leave their souls? What of one who took no more account of his worldly affairs, day by day, or year by year? What of any who awaited with just as much care the inroad of enemies, who would wreak on you, your wives and children, the horrors we read of in Holy Scripture? And is *that* then thought with regard to the soul which would be thoughtlessness as to body, or estate? is *that* watchfulness as to the deadly enemy of our souls which would be recklessness as to bodily foes? are heaven and hell, God and Satan, everlasting joy and woe, God's promises and His threats a dream? or are men thoughtlessly dreaming on to the very brink of hell?

And so, in His mercy, lest, with Dives, we should awake too late in torments, God breaks in upon our dream, and the first step in turning back to Him is, that He turns men back into themselves. 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.' Before this, then, he had not thought on them. 'My ways'; there are, then, divers ways, ways which are not right, ways which are 'clean in a man's own eyes[m],' but not in His Who trieth the hearts; ways which 'seem right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death[n];' a broad, easy

[1] St. Aug. Conf. x. 3.

[m] Prov. xvi. 2.

[n] Ib. xvi. 25.

way, whereon, our Blessed Lord warns us, many go, but it 'leadeth to destruction[o].' And so this man of God, lest he should be on some of these evil ways, took account of his ways; and well was it and of the grace of God, for he adds, 'and I turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.' Before, then, they were not so turned. He speaks not only of striking nearer and closer into the very centre of the narrow way, lest, if we remain on its edge, we slip unperceived out of it; but of being altogether out of the way. 'I turned,' (it is the very same word as 'conversion,' 'or turning unto the Lord our God,') 'I turned my feet *unto* Thy testimonies;' they were then, before turned other ways, and out of the ways of God's law, since they were now to be turned unto them. And yet more, he adds, 'I hasted, and lingered not to keep Thy commandments,' as one who had, for a long time, perhaps his whole life, been wandering unawares out of God's ways, and now found himself in a far country, and much way to recover, and a brief time to do it, and the night perhaps at hand, 'in which no man can work'; but where he should be found in death, there he should awake to judgment. The holy words contain yet more—'I thought,' or more fully in God's own language, 'I took account of[p]' 'reckoned up,' 'calculated,' 'my ways'; for our ways, although leading in one direction, are many; there are as many ways as there are acts, or passions, or temptations; and he 'reckoned them up' and 'took account of' them all, whither they were

[o] St. Matt. vii. 13. [p] חִשַּׁבְתִּי

all leading, to turn them all and his whole self into the way of God. He would, henceforth, not try to walk on two ways, as so many do, unwilling to part wholly with God, or yet with their sins; to walk, as it were, to heaven with one foot, and to hell with the other; for what else does *he* try to do, who would wilfully reserve part of his obedience, in some things serve God, in the rest himself? He wished henceforth to give himself wholly to God, and so he reviewed all, took account of all, lest anything should escape him, and he slip back to evil. And so also, he counted them up before God, as it was said before in this same Psalm, 'I have acknowledged my ways, and Thou heardest me: O teach me Thy statutes.' 'I acknowledged,' and more exactly yet, 'I recounted[q] my ways;' 'recounted' them there, as he 'accounted' them here; recounted, one by one, his own ways, in sorrow before God. 'I recounted *my* ways'; and what else are '*our* ways' but our sins? For they are all the ways of our own wilfulness, and any good in us is not ours, but God's. As a father[r] briefly says, 'I confessed *my* ways. Thou heardest, forgavest, effacedst them; teach me *Thine*, not to know them only, but to do them.'

Such, brethren, is the way of all solid conversion to God. He chooses different ways of turning us. He is very patient with us. Some turn faster, some slower; some were not turned so far away, or for so long a time, or did not so wholly turn their backs upon God; some have, perhaps, scarcely perceived the

[q] סִפַּרְתִּי ver. 26. [r] St. Aug. ad loc.

steps whereby they had been brought back. Yet this is the history of almost all who have been deeply turned to God at all. God met them in their way, where they were going. He, in Whom we are, met them mostly in merciful displeasure, as they turned from Him, that they might turn to Him, and find Him in love. He meets us thus, in sickness, sorrow, failure of our hopes, loss of those we love, aching of the heart, or He summoneth us before Him by some stronger thrill or pang of conscience, by fear of death or hell, and asketh us, 'Whose art thou? whence comest thou? whither goest thou[s]?' He stands in the way, as the angel before Balaam, and brings us to a stand. And so He sends us back into ourselves, casts some ray of light into our souls, lights up before us past and to come, how our ways have been turned from Him, and whither they lead, until we shrink back in terror from the pit of hell to which they were tending. He has doubtless called many by these very words. 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.' If for one by whom God vouchsafed to speak, who had promised to keep God's law, who had chosen the better part and God for his own, and could say those great words, 'Thou, (not any created thing, but) Thou, Thyself, art my portion, O Lord[t]' if for such an one it had not been safe to go on, but he had had to think on and recount his ways, and so to turn to God, how shall it be for me?

How can it be safe for us, brethren, not to know,

[s] Gen. xvi. 8. [t] Ps. cxix. 57.

as fully as we can, our past lives? How can we be forgiven our sins, unless we repent of them? or repent of them, unless we know them? or know them, unless we think on them? Or do ye think that because ye know in a general way where ye passed your lives, what has been your outward calling, your bodily employment, with whom ye have lived, conversed, yea, the changes of your circumstances, therefore ye know your inward lives? Your lives are not the mere outward life of the body; they are chiefly the life of the soul; not merely what we did, spake, thought, but why we did what we did, whether we lived, acted, thought, with a view to God, or to the world and ourselves. If the Psalmist knew not of *his* ways before he thus pondered, weighed them; if before this, he was on a wrong way; if the greater part of mankind are deceiving themselves, thinking that they shall be saved, while they are yet on 'the broad way which leadeth to destruction;' yea, if men even think themselves safe, *because* they are on the broad way, and do as others do, because they are not singular, but are with the many who go to destruction; how can we think that we are safe, if we 'think' not 'on our ways'?

On the contrary, all, probably, who ever thought on their ways, have found with the Psalmist, that they before deceived themselves. It is of *us* that the Psalmist chiefly speaks; for *us* that God put it into his mouth so to speak; that we, taking his words into ours, might bear witness to ourselves. We repeat, month by month, or some day by day, to God, 'I

thought on my ways and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies;' we confess what is needful to us, if we have not done it; what is true, and a blessing to us, if we have. It is mostly by little steps that people go out of the way. Even great falls are prepared by many little falls. They hold little things of no account, and so, as the wise man saith, 'they fall by little and little [u].' And thus, they know not when they went out of God's way, because, perhaps, their whole life has been, step by step, a going out of His way. The ways of life and death part most often at what seems at first something very slight. They will seem to go on, long time, side by side, and even to the last, they who think not on their ways will not see that they have parted, because to them, not observing whither they were going, the ways have widened slowly. Yet, in the end, they are as wide apart as that wherein they end, heaven or hell.

Ye often see images of this, how very little two ways part, yet he who hath entered on the one will never reach his home, if that home be on the other, unless he retrace his way, or strike back out of that which he has chosen amiss.

We cannot understand what we are now, unless we look back, as far as we may, on all we have been. The same state, in outward show, will be very different as men are sinking down or rising up, going on or returning. Two men may be alike out of the road; yet if the one is leaving the right road, the other striking back into it, their ends will be very

[u] Ecclus. xix. 1.

different. This or that act may be a sin of weakness, or negligence, or ignorance; but if often repeated, and not repented, it will be known sin. And so people cheat themselves. They will not see their whole selves. They *will* forget that to-day's act of gluttony, or levity, or self-will, or seeking man's praise, if it be added to those of former days, is not merely a slight sin, but is making them what Scripture calls gluttons, or vain or heady persons. They will not see that each fresh, unrepented sin, is one step more out of the way, one step more on the way to hell. They will not look back, lest they should see how far out of the way they are, how much they must undo. Yet believe this, my brethren, it is the fruit of experience. Whosoever, I may say, has not, all his life through, been taking heed to his ways, and has, at whatever time, been brought, by the grace of God, to look back on his whole past life, has found much evil, which he thought not of; much or most which he thought to be good, to be at least mixed up with, and spoiled by, real evil. Very many have found that they were on the way to hell, when they thought they were on the way to heaven, because they could not part with the hope of it. If this have been so with others, why should it not be with thee? If all who look not into themselves, forget themselves, are ignorant of themselves, whence knowest thou thyself? If others were, unknowing, on the brink of hell, how knowest thou that it is not just before thy feet? There are many ways to hell; one only to life; the way is narrow; not to take heed, is to miss it; 'the snares of death

encompass us;' not to take heed, is to fall into them. Not fully to know thyself, as far as thou canst, is to walk blindly on a precipice, where to fall, is to perish for ever.

Be not disheartened, because it seems so great a task to review the ways of a whole life, in which, perhaps, some of us could not recall distinctly one single day. God asketh of thee what thou canst do, not what thou canst not; and what God teacheth to do, He enables to do, as far as is needed. If we do what we can, He Who, by His grace, enables us to do it, and, for His mercy's sake, accepts it, will, 'out of the exhaustless fountain of His mercy and the treasure of His merits[x],' supply what is lacking, either to the knowledge of our sins or to our repentance. Our ways, entangled though they have been, will not seem so, if we set ourselves steadily to look at them; and He Who, in the Judgment Day will lay them open to those who know them not here, will, if we pray, lay them open to us now, that we see them not to our endless shame then.

Only be in earnest, and pray to be so. Look back into thyself; bring, as well as thou canst, thy past life before thee, or throw thyself back into it. Something which has been amiss in thee, which has not been according to the law of God, will mostly stand out before thee; trace it back into its first beginnings, (it is almost always some sin of childhood,) see how much of life perhaps it stained, whether it

[x] See Paradise for the Christian Soul, P. iii. Penitence, pp. 35 and 54.

is wholly mastered now, whether it be in thee in some other form still, what other sins it branched out into. Or try to bring before you your earliest life. Recall in it any one fault you can remember. It was, too likely, the first parting from the law of God. The sins of childhood are the images and shadows of the deeper sins of the full-grown being. Some deceit to cover a childish fault, some wrong curiosity, some unchecked feeling of envy or jealousy, some indulged anger, or wrong desire of human praise, or vanity, some preference of self or emulation of others, have been, alas! too often the forerunners of years of deadly sin, or of a wrong aim in all life, of direct evil, or the eating out and cankering of that which was good.

Do this, in mind, under the Eye of your merciful Redeemer. Pray Him, Who searcheth the hearts and reins, to lay open thine own to thee, and to have compassion on thee. It may be that thou wilt find what thou hast hitherto thought good in thee, melt away before the fire of His holy Presence. Yet, even thus, own unto Him, that 'thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,' and buy of Him, as He biddeth thee[y], 'gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.' It may be that thou wilt find thyself from head to foot a leper, almost thy whole self tainted with the leprosy of some

[y] Rev. iii. 17, 18.

prevailing sin; yet, even thus, fall down before Him, with the leper in the Gospel, and say, 'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean,' and He will say unto thee also, 'I will; be thou clean[z].' It would bring but despair to review our sins, except, as St. Mary Magdalene, at the foot of His Cross. It will deepen thy penitence, while it sustains thee: it will deepen thy penitence, since thy sins nailed Him there, and thou perhaps hast crucified Him afresh, and wasted in thyself the price of His blood; It will sustain thee, since for thee He was crucified, for thee on the Cross He prayed, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do[a].'

He, Who hath prayed for thee, will strengthen thee. Only, when thy heart is set at liberty, pray that thou mayest '*run* the way of God's commandments.' 'Make haste and delay not to keep God's commandments.' Nothing besides lingers. Time is sweeping by. Thy life is hasting away. The Day of Judgment is drawing on. Eternity is at hand. The Judge is at the door. Year by year whirls on more rapidly. Thy way, if it be not turned backward to God, is hurrying thee more onward, away from Him and to the pit. If not nearer, day by day it becomes further. Thou must feel thyself far short of that measure, which God in the eternal purpose of His Goodness intended for thee. Thou canst not think that thou wast made in the image of God, redeemed by the Precious Blood of Christ, endowed with His Spirit, called to His faith, waited for by

[z] St. Matt. viii. 2, 3. [a] St. Luke xxiii. 34.

His Grace, watched over by His Providence, tended by angels, chosen to be set among them in His Presence in everlasting bliss, to enter into the joy of thy Lord, and be nothing more than now thou art! Choose then, with stedfast heart, Him Who hath chosen thee; love Him Who hath loved thee. 'Make haste and delay not.' Pray Him to draw thee, that thou mayest run after Him; lay aside every weight, that thou mayest run; and He will give thee strength that 'thou shalt run and not be weary, walk and not faint[b].' 'He will bear thee up, that thou dash not thy foot against a stone.' 'Thou shalt tread on the lion and the dragon[c],' through Him, Who trode them under His feet, that He might tread them under thine. He will give thee 'grace for grace,' He will lead thee 'from strength to strength.' He, if in earnest thou seek Him now, and give thyself wholly to Him, will give thee back all thou hast lost; the grace thou hast wasted; the love thou hast chilled; the purity thou hast stained; His Spirit Which thou hast grieved. He, in the residue of thy years, will accomplish in thee all His work; He will form thee to the full stature of His grace and love for Which He made thee, that thou mayest love Him 'with an everlasting love,' in overflowing joy, and transporting glory, and never-sating, ever-satisfying bliss, in Himself, the Fountain of all bliss and all good.

[b] Is. xl. 31. [c] Ps. xci. 12, 13.

SERMON IX[a].

COMPROMISES.

1 KINGS xviii. 21.

'And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: and if Baal, follow him.'

STRANGE is it, if we think *Who* God is, *what* Baal was, that such a choice should have ever had to be put to man; stranger yet, that it should have had to be put to a people to Whom God had declared His love for them, His individual care of them and of each soul among them. Stranger still, that he who put it amid all that Carmel-din, was *one*; they to whom it was put, the representatives of almost a whole nation, all but the 7000. Strangest perhaps of all, not that any should openly apostatise, not that brutalized minds should give themselves up to a brutalizing worship, but that any, nay that most of that vast multitude should think, that they could unite in themselves two such opposite worships—the worship of God, Who forbade the murder of man formed in His own Image, and the worship of a god,

[a] Preached at a College Service.

to whom children were burned alive; the worship of a God of purity, and (which all their nature-worships were) of a god of lust. And yet, since '[b] *his* servants ye are, whom ye obey,' the belly, the world, lust, anger, cruelty, are not the less worshipped, because the personal names, under which men deified their passions, are no longer in use. Human nature remains the same; God's claim on the sole allegiance of the creatures whom He made, remains the same; the temptingness of things out of God or contrary to God remains still the same: God's word then speaks to our souls in histories, unlike in form; in their essence, they are our very selves.

The world is still full of compromises. One might say, the world of this day is one great compromise. It hates nothing so much as Elijah's choice. It will allow us our 'opinions,' if we will not urge the Faith, as it was from the first, as *the* exclusive truth. It will allow us our practices, if we do not trench upon its neglects[c]. It will be content to regard our choices, as the results of our antecedents, of our natural constitution of mind, if we will say nothing of the grace of God, and will allow that all other choices are just as well suited to others, just as good in themselves; that evil choices are not the result of their free neglect of the grace of God, and their own disordering of the nature which He gave them. It will even praise liberal almsgiving, so that such giving be allowed to be an exception, not a

[b] Rom. vi. 16.

[c] Fanaticism has unlearned even this degree of tolerance, 1882.

necessity of salvation, incumbent upon every one according to his ability, as he would find mercy in the Day which decides eternity.

What the poor world hates is, naturally, what condemns itself. The world is lax, it must hate strictness: the world is lawless, it must hate absolute unyielding law, which presses it: the world would be sovereign, keeping religion in its own place, to minister to its well-being, to correct excesses, to soothe it, when wanted. It would own its usefulness, so it be not exacting. But a kingdom, which though not of this world, demands the absolute submission of the world; which would '[d] take down vain reasonings, and every lofty thing which raiseth itself against the knowledge of God, and would take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ;' which offers perfect freedom, but only through perfect subjection to the mind of God ('[e] slaves,' S. Paul calls himself and us, to God 'and our Lord Jesus Christ and the law of God[f]'); which gives perfect wisdom, but only according to the mind of the All-wise, must of course provoke the opposition of the world, until it too have learned to revolve around its Sun, the Sun of Righteousness.

But the world is weak, and, amid all its grand

[d] 2 Cor. x. 5.

[e] δουλεύω Acts xx. 19; Rom. vii. 6, xiv. 18, xvi. 18.; Col. iii. 24; 1 Thess. i. 9. δοῦλοι, the Apostles, Acts iv. 29. S. Paul, Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. vii. 22; 2 Cor. x. 7; Gal. i. 10; Eph. vi. 6; Phil. i. 2; Col. iv. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 24; Tit. i. 1. S. James i. 1. 1 S. Pet. ii. 16; 2 S. Pet. i. 1. S. Jude 1. Rev. 12 times.

[f] Rom. vii. 25.

words, knows its weakness. Satan knows it too. For three centuries he tried brute force; and his instruments were maddened, that by no extremity of torture could they bend the God-sustained will of Christians[g]. Yet here too was compromise on the world's part. Persecution would have ceased, Christians might have worshipped Christ, as they pleased, if only, by casting a little incense on Jupiter's altar, they would have owned that Christ was not, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, alone the God; that is, not *God* at all. Then, force failing, Satan tried a more refined compromise. All the whole history of heresy is one long history of varied compromise. 'We would be Christians,' they said in effect, 'we *are* Christians; only we cannot believe that the Son is one God with the Father; or that God took our nature into Himself, or that human nature is fallen, and needs the grace of God; or that Christ gives Himself to us under those poor visible forms of earth.'

Now he takes a bolder line, even to the denial of the Being of God, making our poor selves our god[h], but he still begins by compromise. He repeats what was so miserably successful in paradise. '[i]Hath God indeed said?' He would take us each on our weak side. Has God indeed forbidden a noble ambition, or a proper pride, or a moderate love of the world, or this or that, (I must not say what, your own

[g] This is visible throughout the conversations of the Prefects and the martyrs, in Ruinart, Acta Martyrum.

[h] Comte. [i] Gen. iii. 1.

minds will supply it,) which has made our nature to crave? Or would He limit the range of thought with which He has endowed us? Or would He do violence to the conscience which He has made, the representative of Himself within us, so that it should not be an absolute, individual judge of His own Words? Would He have us receive as truth, what is repugnant to our conceptions of His love, such as our very nature teaches us to conceive it?

He knows well, by the experience of these centuries of conflict for human souls, how great is the power of the love of God over the souls which He has made for Himself: how unwillingly He parteth with them; how the soul instinctively dreads to part altogether with its God. He sees too, how essential to the love and faith in God are humility and purity, though he cannot understand, in themselves, the temptations of the flesh, which he has not, or humility, which he never had. But he is wise enough to begin his attacks on either from afar off: on purity, by something not felt to be sin; on humility, by thoughts of not being behind the age; that things questioned by the talented, must needs be questionable; that it is a mark of intellect not to believe what some of keen intellect have, alas! parted with; or it is a grand thing, you perhaps imagine, to think for yourselves, and not be the slaves of any traditional creeds, of any preconceived dogmas, of any binding laws, out of yourselves. You hear, on the one hand, of the 'reign of law' in all the physical creation. But, of a 'reign of law' over yourselves, a 'reign of law' over

your whole being, to infringe which is to violate nature itself; of a relation of yourselves, your whole being and every faculty of your being, to your God, in some created likeness of Whom every faculty of yours was formed, to be perfected in that Image and Likeness,—of this, modern philosophy teaches nothing.

In every other subject of human knowledge, all progress is made by building up upon its principles. In Divine knowledge alone, progress is to be through their subversion. The principle of this new knowledge is, to have no principle, except that the human mind, bribed as it is by its passions; blind, unless God be its Enlightener; narrow, unless God enlarge it; a magnificent ruin, unless God by His Grace repair it, is to be the standard, the rule, the arbiter of what is proposed to its belief;—to speak plainly, what it comes to, that man is the Creator of his God.

But this, by degrees only. The first step (which since faith is one, involves the whole) is the rejection of the first doctrine or practice, enjoined by God's Word, because it commends not itself to our individual judgement. The great predisposing cause is, that, because boundless progress is made in discoveries in God's works, therefore we are in some different attitude to their Maker; as though an almost boundless discovery of things finite could bridge over our distance from the Infinite; as though we were less creatures because we know a very little more of the magnificence of our Creator, to Whom all our creations, and all future creations, and all possible creations,

though they shall never be, are still but as the finite to the Infinite, i. e. as nothing; dependent for being called into being, or continued in it, on His absolute Will.

Lift up your hearts for a while from this busy activity of finite thought, guessing but darkly at any thing spiritual or as to your own souls, which is not revealed by God. Think of your eternal home, if by God's mercy you attain. Who is that God with Whom you shall live for ever? Is He a God, Who can have pleasure in impurity? or with Whom ambition can have place? Shall ye have pride then in that place in the many mansions which God has created for you, or self-elation for the gifts which God shall bestow upon you, or for those fuller revelations, not of science, but of God Himself, which He shall unfold? Or will ye insist there that God shall disclose all to yourselves directly, and nothing through Cherubim or Seraphim or any other creature, and that you are entitled to reject what shall place, as is now said, the creature between you and your Creator? Or will you claim that nothing shall be unfolded to you, which fills and surpasses the capacities of your minds, and which you have not first subjected to the approval of your own individual judgement? Will you proffer to God to own Him, if He will condescend to exist as other than He is, and to be, alone in His creation, without any Co-Equal Object of His Infinite Love? Or will you, amid the bliss of that eternal thanksgiving to your Redeemer, when you see those glorious Wounds illumining heaven with the light of

the Godhead, insist on not believing the humiliation of the Incarnation; or seeing *that*, shall you say that it is impossible that He could hide Himself under those poor earthly symbols, to give Himself to you? Or will you make it a condition of your thanksgiving for the bliss of heaven that there shall be no hell, from which, through His Passion, you were redeemed, to which you sometimes, step by step, sometimes, with headlong course, were going, and from which He, with His nail-pierced Hands, withheld you, and by some over-powering grace turned you back to Himself?

In sight of those realities, the earth-born mists, which men are so busy in raising, are absorbed in the glow of the Sun of Righteousness. Be *His*, Whose you wish to be for ever. Choose *Him*, by Whom you have been chosen. You have not, like the heathen, to choose Him for the first time, as though He had for the first time revealed Himself to you. He has saved you from the risk of that perilous choice. You have only not to reject the choice which He in all eternity made of you, to be members of His Body, to bear his Name, to be His, not in word or in name only, but in deed and truth. Day by day you are unconsciously making the choice; day by day you are enslaving yourselves to his service from whom you have been delivered, or emerging more and more to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. But every day, in which some line of God's Image is not traced on your souls, is a loss for eternity. Choose Him anew now; choose Him, Who Alone Is, to be yours;

choose to be henceforth wholly His. Other lords, it may be, have, partially at least, had dominion over you. Let not the seal of Heaven mark the deserter. Say this day with His converted people, '[k]The Lord He is the God; the Lord He is the God." O Lord, be Thou Alone our God, and our Portion for ever.

[k] 1 Kings xviii. 39.

SERMON X[a].

WHY DID DIVES LOSE HIS SOUL?

S. Luke xvi. 25.

'But Abraham said; Son, thou in thy life-time receivedst the good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

It has become a sort of sacred proverb, 'No man passeth from delights to delights'—from delights of the senses to delights of the spirit; from delights in things temporal to delights in things eternal; from delights in the creature to delights in the Creator; from pleasures of time and sense to the pleasures at the Right Hand of God for evermore; from joys in things *out of* God, to 'enter into the joy of our Lord,' *in* God. And therefore God has so mercifully sprinkled the destructive sweetness of this life with healthful bitternesses[b]. He afflicts those who are at ease with sorrow within or without. Fence themselves with comforts how they will, they cannot fence out the invisible messengers of God. God bereaves, pierces their souls, sends manifold sickness, disappoints

[a] Preached at All Saints, Margaret Street, Ash Wednesday, 1865,

[b] S. Aug. Conf. iii. 1.

the soul of what it is set upon, strikes it through and through with the darts of conscience, wearies it with satiety, draws off the veil from their pleasures, and shews one end of all, corruption, and the worm creeping in and out of the sightless eyeholes.

Then come mostly the distress and weariness of the last sickness, and that almost-sacrament of death, hallowed, as an instrument of mercy and a channel of grace, by the precious Death of Jesus. So we may hope for souls, whom we could not endure to think of as lost, while yet we dare not incur the risk, from which they shrank not.

And therefore, since a life of worldly pleasure is so perilous, God has given us this sacred season of Lent, not that we may take up a few good practices, a little self-discipline or mortification, to be laid aside at Easter until the next Lent, just as people exchange the black of their mourning for all their former gay dresses, till Death again strikes one near to them. Lent has its lasting lessons, as well as its own deeper humiliation. Our Passover [c] is a season, not of going back, but of passing on, of inworking into life by His grace, what, by that grace, we have learned of humility or penitence, or prayer, or simplicity, or self-sacrificing love.

And so our Lord has sent us to-day a strict preacher; not only the austere Baptist, in his raiment of hair-cloth, 'Behold the axe is laid to the root of the tree;' not His own words of Divine love, nor the fiery flame of Paul's glowing soul, nor the deep tenderness of the

[c] S. Bern. Serm. in die Pasch. n. 14.

beloved disciple, nor Peter's zeal for his Master's glory, nor the royal Penitent. He sends us one of ourselves; one, respectable, in man's sight blameless, whom all spoke well of, just, upright, honest, such as are thousands in this city from North to South, from East to West; one who, if among us, would be respected, imitated, followed, flattered, sought, sued; whose lot would be envied, but—alas for that 'but' at the end, from which God in His mercy preserve us all!—damned. It is common to wish that we could see some one from that bourne, whence no traveller returns, to tell us of its dread secrets, and whether God is, after all, so strict a Judge, as He says in His Word. The voices which are said to have come from the other side the grave, have not been encouraging to sin; the sights, which have been seen, are terrible. But now, our Dear Lord opens with His own Lips one secret of that dread prison-house, and shews us a lost soul. Let us ask him then, 'Why wert thou damned?' Our Lord will provide, that he should answer truly. 'Didst thou seduce others to sin? didst thou take away life, or defile thy neighbour's bed?' He answers, 'My Judge does not pronounce any thing of this of me; He has condemned me, but not for any of this.' 'Didst thou then any of those things, to which we owned just now, "the curse of God to be due [d]?" Didst thou "pervert the judgement of the stranger, the fatherless and widow;" or "smite thy neighbour secretly," or "take reward against the innocent," or wert thou "fornicator, slanderer, drunkard, extor-

[d] Commination Service.

tioner?"' 'Neither did my Judge pronounce me guilty of these.' 'Was it then for something, of which it were a shame to speak?' 'My Judge said it not of me.' 'Damned, but not for any of these things, which men call crimes or vices! For what then?' O, if we could hear the horrible anguish of that remorseful cry, 'I had all my good things in my life and I had not mercy upon Lazarus.'

We should lose the force of our Blessed Lord's teaching, if we imagine things which He has not said. He has told us elsewhere His judgement on those other sins; and alas! many rich, once made members of Christ, are guilty of them. One, who should live like Dives, would be in proximate peril of very many sins. Luxurious society has very many sins; high feeding leads to wanton living. Aggravated, deepened sin will issue in deeper damnation. But had our Lord meant this to be the instruction of this history, He would have told us. He tells us not, that Dives forgat God altogether, or that he did not pacify his conscience by some good desires now and then. He tells us not, that he did not say his prayers, or that he did not go to the synagogue services—perhaps he was a regular Church-goer, set a good example, as men say; he *may* even have used the Pharisee's voluntary fasting, and given to God with exact scrupulosity the tithe of all which he possessed; he is not blamed for any outward neglect, though plainly his heart could not have been right with God; else he had not lost his soul. But outwardly, his may have been a respectable, decorous, Pharisee religion. One only sin has been

thought to be hinted at in that especial punishment of the tongue, the favourite sin of our Christian world, backbiting. Perhaps he had not refinement enough for a new sin, which I hear of in our fastidious times, 'ambiguous words.' Any how, it is likely enough, that he spoke amiss. 'Because loquacity,' says S. Gregory[e], 'is wont to abound at feasts' (in our days, he might have said, is their chief zest), 'he, who is said to have feasted amiss here, is related to burn in hell most grievously in his tongue. Scripture says, "The people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play." But before the body is moved to play, the tongue is moved to jokes and idle words.'

Still more alarming is the thought, that Dives lived, not only a life of negative, superficial respectability, but that he did some good things, and was rewarded for them. You know how our Lord says of those who do good for the praise of men, 'Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.' They have it to themselves, the word means[f], wholly here; and so, when they come to die, there is no more for them to have. S. Gregory thinks that our Lord means the same by the use of the like word here. 'If[g],' he says, 'ye are of those who in this world have received any outward good, ye ought to fear greatly that very outward good, lest it should be given you in recompense for some act of yours; lest the Judge, Who requites you here with outward goods, repel you from the reward of the inward good; lest the honour and riches here be, not

[e] Serm. 40 in Ev. n. 5. [f] S. Matt. vi. 2, 5, 16.
[g] l. c. n. 6.

an aid to virtues, but the remuneration for toil. For when it is said, "Thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things," it is indicated that the rich man had some good, for which in this life he was to receive good. And again, when it is said of Lazarus, that he "received evil things," it is shewn that Lazarus too had some evil which was to be cleansed. But the fire of want purged the evil things of Lazarus; and the happiness of a fleeting life remunerated the good things of the rich man. Poverty afflicted and cleansed the one: abundance remunerated and rejected the other. Ye then, whoever are well off in this world, fear exceedingly for yourselves, when ye remember that ye have done good things, lest the prosperity allowed you be the remuneration for those same good things. And when ye see any poor do some blameworthy things, despise them not, despond not of them; for perhaps what is very slightly amiss, the furnace of poverty cleanses. For yourselves by all means fear exceedingly, in that, even after some things ill-done, a prosperous life hath followed. But for them, weigh carefully, that poverty, set over them as a mistress, excruciates their life, until it have brought it right.'

But since our Lord does not ascribe any ill to Dives, save that which was inseparable from his life, and since he had probably some natural good in him, what was there in his life so offensive to Almighty God, that his soul was lost, and that he was for ever separated from the sight of God?

It was not simply his hard-heartedness to Lazarus; else our Lord would have dwelt on this alone.

Priest and Levite passed by on the other side from the place, where lay the wounded wayfarer. Our Lord has taught us that the unmerciful shall not obtain mercy; but this is not all. Else He would not have set before us all the rest. The unmercifulness comes as an incident in his life, perhaps an inseparable incident. But it is not the centre of his life. A shilling or two, given grudgingly to get rid of the sight of Lazarus, would not have changed his doom, unless God in His mercy had used even this grudging alms to change himself.

Our Lord tells us three things only of him directly; 'He was clothed in purple and fine linen;' a gorgeous, certainly, and beautiful dress, such as the rich only wore; yet not above his station, as men say. It was a token of pride—all fine dressing is. 'Some,' says St. Gregory[h] very simply yet truly, 'think the adornment of very fine and costly garments to be no sin. Had it been no fault, the word of God would not express so carefully, that the rich man who is in tortures in hell, had been clothed in purple and fine linen.—For the facts themselves attest, that no one gets choice dress save for vainglory alone, that he may seem more distinguished than others; in that no one cares about being dressed in costly attire, where he cannot be seen by others.' Then, 'he fared sumptuously every day.' Again, there is no imputation of excess either in meat or drink. Our Lord does not say, that he was a gluttonous man or a drunkard, or that he verged on excess without actually falling into it. Our Lord uses a very

[h] l. c. n. 3.

mild word, which, in itself, conveys no blame, He used it also in the parable of the other rich man, who 'said to his soul, Soul, thou hast much good laid up in store for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry[1]'; and of that feast of holy joy, wherewith the good father welcomed back the returning prodigal, and, in reference to this, the eldest son, who led a respectable life in his father's house, upbraided his father, 'Thou never gavest me a kid to make merry with my friends.' He made 'good cheer,' and that 'splendidly,' 'magnificently,' (so the words mean). There is not one word about excess, about having persons at his table notorious for their immorality, (gallantry, the world calls it.) He kept a well-appointed table, and was known for the magnificence of his entertainments. Had he lived in these days, the world would have been told the next morning—'Dives gave a splendid entertainment at his elegant mansion in such a square, and, among the distinguished company, were such and such of the fashionable world.' And some of the younger of you, perhaps, would have wished that they had been there; and mothers would have bethought themselves how they could obtain tickets for Lady Dives' next assembly. Nor again is it said that he got his riches in any wrong way, or that he was extravagant with them, or was in debt to his tradesmen, or so delayed his payments as to cause distress or inconvenience to any of them. He was rich, and he lived up to his income. That is all. Nor again is there any aggravation as to

[1] S. Luke xii. 19.

his neglect of Lazarus. Our Lord does not say that Lazarus even begged of him; it only says that he 'was laid,' as a cripple doubtless, at the gate of his court-yard, and 'desired to be filled with the fragments which fell from the rich man's table,' such as the dogs ate then, and eat now, and which the poor did not get then, as now too they very seldom get them. Much plenty, much waste, much forgetfulness of God's poor! But we hear of no harsh refusal. Dives was pre-occupied probably with the conversation with his rich friends, and scarcely noticed or did not notice Lazarus, or thought that he exercised charity enough in allowing him to lie there. 'Others, doubtless, would take care of him,' he thought, if he thought at all; 'it was a shocking, loathsome sight for *him* to go near. It would spoil his feast and his appetite.' And, compared to our habits, it *was* so far a charity, which we should not exercise. Servants or the police would have been bidden to remove such an object. It would have been a memorable deed of charity had he, before entering in to his feast, paused for a moment, to direct that Lazarus should be taken to the workhouse. Probably he would have cared little whither he was removed, so that he lay not *there*. Dives, if he thought at all, was right, that others would relieve Lazarus; he had the charity of the dogs, and must have been fed somehow, perhaps by the poor, who gave him of *their* bread.

And so, at last, the end came. Whether God saw that space of repentance would only bring deeper guilt upon him, and so cut him off suddenly, or whether he

wasted that last respite, he died as he had lived. Perhaps in these days, we should, some of us, have read at our breakfast-table, the next morning, 'We regret to announce that Dives was taken ill in the midst of a splendid and select circle, remained insensible, and died at an early hour this morning.' And then, among us, would have followed the account of the great wealth which he left, and who inherited it, and how his entertainments would be missed in fashionable society; and then, in a few days, his splendid funeral, and the mourning carriages, and the number of the nobility who sent their empty carriages as a tribute of respect to his hospitality, and his magnificent tomb at his family seat, and its flattering inscription.

And people would have said a word or two of the sudden death of Dives, or moralised a little on the instability of human things. I doubt whether any now would have spoken of him, with a truth which they would not understand, as '*poor* Dives.' One thing alone people would have shut their eyes to, 'Where is he now?' Our Lord lifts up the veil, and tells us, 'in torments,' 'tormented in this flame.' Alas, Dives, who would be of thy party now?

What was it then in this life, with so little obvious blame, a life led so fearlessly by so many tens or hundreds of thousands among us, a life led by such multitudes in this and in every city without one misgiving, which was so offensive to God, that Dives is among the damned? Our Lord spoke this, be it history or parable, chiefly for us Christians. His words have been recited among us above these 1800 years. It is

a mere negative life, a life in which no great harm was done, nothing but what was inseparable from the life itself; and yet he is damned!

One might say, that his whole life was contrary to the three central graces, faith, hope, and charity. He was living concentrated on self, apart from God and from any real love of man, indulgent to self, hard-hearted to misery.

Or, again, one might say, that it is wholly contrary to the Cross of Christ. 'God predestinated us,' S. Paul says. To what? To eternal life? This is the end of all. But to what first? 'God predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son[k].' What image? Well! Be it the image of His holiness, the image of His glory. Are there then no scars on that glorious Form, brighter than the sun or than all created light, irradiant with His Godhead? If we would reign with Him, S. Paul tells us[l] that 'we must first suffer with Him.' If we would be conformed to the likeness of His glory, we must first be conformed to the likeness of His suffering. '[m]Too delicate art thou, my brother, if thou willest both here to rejoice with the world, and hereafter to reign with Christ.' Is the portion which God gave to His well-beloved Son, one from which to shrink? Rather, God says that it is part of His eternal love, that in that boundless eternity God fore-knew and fore-ordained all those sufferings, crosses, sorrows, each in its own measure and its own weight, that thereby we may be

[k] Rom. viii. 29. [l] 2 Tim. ii. 12.

[m] S. Jer. Ep. 14. ad Heliod. n. 10. p. 36. Vall.

conformed to the Son of His Love, Who bare the Cross for us, that, thereafter, when He had made us members of Himself, He might bear ours in us. We hear much, now, of the believer being identified with Christ, so that men deny the atonement, on the ground that '[n]if Christ is one with the believer, He cannot be regarded strictly as a victim who takes [took] his place.' Blessed be His Infinite love, that first He identified Himself with us by being '[o]made sin for us,' that we might be identified with Him, by being 'made the righteousness of God in Him.' Blessed be His Divine compassion, that first He bare our sins and guilt and punishment, that He might give us of His Spirit, His grace, His holiness; that He took our evils, in order to give us His good. But was Jesus then Incarnate, did God become Man, did He pay that dear price of all His Precious Blood, did He bear the weight of His Father's displeasure against sin, and was He made 'sin' and 'a curse,' that He might merit for us the grace of living unsacrificing lives, keeping ourselves, as we think, from gross vices, wearing a fair reputation before men, honest, just in our dealings, but doing nothing good? Was our Redeemer crowned with thorns, that we might be refined sensualists? Did He come down from heaven, that we might forget heaven and Him, steeped in all which we can get of this life's fleeting pleasures of sense? Ask Him, Who was crucified for love of you. '[p]If any man *will* to come after me, let him deny

[n] Jowett on the Atonement. On the Epp. ii. 562.
[o] 2 Cor v. 21
[p] S. Luke ix. 23.

himself, and take up His cross daily and follow Me.' Our Lord makes our coming after Him an act of our own free-will. 'If any man *wills* to come.' He invites us lovingly; '[q] Come unto Me, ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' He tells us His will for us, '[r] That where I am, there may My servant be.' He loves us to choose Him, with our free God-given love. But one thing He does not withhold from us; if we *do* will to follow Him, our only Good, we must bear our little crosses on the narrow road, which He tracked for us on His blood-stained way to Calvary. They are heavy tones of wounded love with which He says, '[s] He that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me.' Not worthy of Him! O what words! When we are all so unworthy; when all is of His worthiness; to be disowned as unworthy, by Him Who so loved us and Who longed to give us of His worthiness!

Or ask the beloved Disciple, who drank in his wisdom and his love on Jesus' breast. '[t] If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Or ask that heart of fire, who always carried about in the body the doing-to-death of Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in his body; who died daily; who was co-crucified with Christ; whose life in the flesh was Christ living in him; were these only the marks of thine Apostolate, the badge of thy high office? Not so, he says, '[u] They who are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and desires.'

[q] S. Matt. xi. 28. [r] S. John xii. 26. [s] S. Matt. x. 38.
[t] 1 S. John ii. 15. [u] Gal. v. 24.

'[x]Be ye fellow-imitators of me, and mark those who so walk, as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I have often spoken to you, and now also speak weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ.' What? Did they blaspheme? did they persecute? did they contradict? did they deny? Not in words, but in life: '[y]Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and their glory is in their shame, whose mind is on earthly things.' What a climax is this! One might have thought perhaps that some deeper sins lay in the words, 'Their glory is in their shame.' But he brings us back, as the sum and substance of all, to the way of life of Dives: 'Whose mind is on earthly things.' And then, that we may not mistake, he mounts up, where his own way of life and hope and love and soul were gone, and were aloft with Jesus: he summons us thither with himself to Jesus. '*Their* mind is on earthly things,' but '[z]our [Christians'] conversation is in heaven.'

But St. Paul ever speaks burning words. Ask then that calm writer, who speaks by the Holy Ghost in words of such still practical wisdom. Still the same solemn voice, '[a]Whoso will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God.' There remain but two, to fill up the sacred choir of the Apostles. Ask them. It is not of any special sin (however near such sin may lie to this continual ease) that S. Peter and S. Jude speak, when they give us one comprehensive

[x] Phil. iii. 17-18.
[y] Phil. iii. 19.
[z] Ib. 20.
[a] S. James iv. 4.

description of ungodliness, '[b]following their own desires' in their unbridled undisciplined life.

To Christians it were enough condemnation of this life, that it is the very contradictory of the Cross of Christ. This comprises all evil, as to be a follower of Him, our Redeemer, is the sum of all good and grace.

But look again in detail. What grace is there room for, in this life of frivolity, of self-indulgence, of sense, of self? I must not, I suppose, name repentance. It has a harsh austere sound in delicate ears. David says of himself, '[c]Every night make I my bed to swim; and I water my couch with my tears.' What a penitence! It would spoil the eyes, and ruin all one's looks. Besides, these persons are to live wholly blameless lives! I wonder how they can say the Psalms on Sundays, (for it becomes respectable Christians to do so,) or call themselves 'miserable sinners,' unless they mean that Adam was so; or how they can tell God that 'the remembrance of their sins is grievous unto them, and the burden of them is intolerable.' I suppose that they mean, it is so to their neighbours, and ought to be to them, if they were such 'as other men are.' *They* have no need of repentance. *They* have never committed, in their youth, sins which the thought of God brings to their mind. Truly I believe that the thought of God does not bring their sins to their mind; for they never think of Him, if they can help it, except that His Providence somehow has made over

[b] 2 Pet. iii. 3. S. Jude 10. [c] Ps. vi. 6.

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to them a portion of His possessions on this earth, for which, since it came to them in the way of nature or of lawful industry, they need not thank Him.

But if, perchance, they should need repentance; if human frailty should have its way in this life of sense; if its code of morality should admit of sins, not less deadly, perhaps not less gross, because compatible with public decorum and respectability, what room could there be for repentance in such a life as this? Listen to the indignant irony of a writer on penitence, who lived not long after S. John. '[d] Does it then become us to put up prayers for our sins in purple and Tyrian colours?—Let him seek out the most delicate baths in sequestered spots in gardens or near the sea: let him add to his expenditure; let him get together fatlings of monstrous growth: let him refine old wines, and when any one shall ask, "On whom dost thou lavish these things?" let him say, "I have sinned against God, and am in danger of perishing everlastingly; and therefore am I anxious, and I pine away and excruciate myself, that I may reconcile unto myself that God, whom I have offended by my sins."'

Well! granted then, that men have no greater overt sins, than can be wiped out by the daily, 'Forgive us our trespasses': granted, that they can go to heaven without repentance, or repent enough for such sins as they have, without sorrow, or that sorrow may be expressed by a mere wish that they

[d] Tertul. de Pœnit. c. 11. p. 368. Oxf. Tr.

had not done the wrong thing,—What have they? Where is life? Where is grace? Where is spirituality? Where is the presence of Christ in them, of which it is said, '[e]Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' 'Where is "[f]holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord"?'

To Dives one had better speak Chinese (for Chinese is at least a language of nature, and there must be heathen likenesses of Dives without the aggravations of his guilt); no language of earth would be more unknown to Dives, than the language of God the Holy Ghost. How should they know of the supernatural, whose whole life is carnal? or of Heaven, whose whole thought is of earth? or of eternity, whose whole business is to kill time? or of God, who think only of Him as of One Whom it is respectable to own, and to think or say good things of Him now and then, and who is to minister to their comfort, and provide somehow that they should prolong in heaven a life, like that of earth without its disagreeables.

But is then this life so surely free from deadly sin? Is not, rather, the whole of it one deadly sin? Of old, sloth used to be counted a deadly sin, and, perhaps, of all the deadly sins the most difficult to recover from, because it is so negative, so unawakening, like sleeping on the snow. Most lives of sin have some pause, some break, some remorse, some intervals of repentance. God may, by some mightier

[e] 2 Cor. xiii. 5. [f] Heb. xii. 14.

power of grace, find, at last, an access to the soul; the soul may receive it, burst its bonds, be converted and live. The life of sloth, or rather the death of sloth, is the more *one* sin, because the whole being itself is sin. The soul escapes seeing individual sins, by keeping within a certain outward decorum. It does not commit sins, which would disgrace it to itself or in the eyes of the world: it is too proud to be mean, or to commit open disorders, or to risk loss of reputation, or to fall into humiliating irregularities, which might, by God's grace perhaps, be the occasion of saving it by humbling it. It practises a heathen probity, costless courtesies, the hollow mimicry of Christian graces, natural virtues; and then it asks, with the rich young man who went away sorrowful from Christ, 'what lack I yet?' Nay it is blind, as *that* rich man was not, for it leaves Christ without being sorrowful; and thinks well of itself, because it is respected by the world which is like it; it applauds itself for its regularity in a life without a rule except self-will, without an occupation except idleness; nay, which makes a strenuous occupation of indolence, which counts pleasure to be the state of life 'to which it has pleased God to call' it; which esteems an universal negligence, save of its comforts or luxury or adornments, the duties of its calling; which counts self-enjoyment the end for which God the Father created it, God the Son redeemed it, God the Holy Ghost sanctified it. Not to do gross evil is the sum and substance of its good. But where then is the yoke of Christ,

so easy because He bears it for us? Where is 'the body of sin' which we bear about us, and from which S. Paul longed to be freed? Where is the body, which S. Paul had to maltreat? Where is the broad road which leadeth to destruction, if this life, so destitute of all restraint, of all violence to self; which such multitudes throng, because it is so easy, so smooth, so toil-less; whose victories, if it had any, require no struggle on the part of man, no grace of God, no prayer for grace, no self-subdual—if such a life as this is 'the narrow'? Where is Christ's woe to the rich, on this ground only, 'because they have received their consolation'? Where is the impossibility of serving two masters, God and Mammon, if love of wealth, of pleasure, of comfort, may possess a man, have dominion over him, occupy his day-thoughts, fill his day-dreams, and he be counted to love God, and be a servant of God and not a servant of Mammon? Which is the Master, He, Who is half remembered in some distracted words (prayer one could not call them without mockery) in the morning, or in some sleepy thoughts at night, with a little extra attendance now and then, on a Sunday, to set the conscience at its ease, and maintain decorum and propriety? Or is it he, who fills the imagination, occupies the memory, masters the thoughts, enslaves the will, binds the affections?

Nor let any one think, that he or she is less like Dives, because they have not the means of the very rich of Palestine, or the Dives' of this land, or because the world does not know of them as Dives', and they

do not make any show in the pomps and vanities of this world, and enjoy those vanities in a quiet way. The characteristic of Dives was selfish and vain enjoyment of his means in the continual round of worldly pleasure, to the destruction of the love of the poor, and so, God says, of the love of God Himself. It was not the amount of the consumption upon himself, but its exclusiveness, which shut out the love of God and damned him. The sinfulness of sin does not depend on the greater or less opportunity of sinning. There may be less of sin, because more temptation, in the selfish profusion of the millionaire than in the selfish comforts of one of moderate means. It is not the splendour of nobles, sorely as one knows that very many forget Lazarus, sorely as one may fear for their salvation: it is not *their* hereditary adherence to the customs handed down to them from their forefathers, which, to one who is accustomed to the thought of eternity, is so frightful in revisiting this great Babylon. It is the growth of luxuries and comforts, as indicated in the shops, the lesser equipages, the dress, the jewelry, the trinkets, the baubles, the varied suits of apparel. It is, that luxuries have become comforts, and comforts have become necessities; nay, that the middle class (I mean, such as, I suppose, are most of us) seems to have confused necessity, luxury, comfort, in one reckless following of self-will. And meanwhile Lazarus, where is he? I saw out of many streets one or two shops (honour be to them) where there were 'charity blankets' to be had, amid every thing all around to tempt to expenditure on self. The rich

had need to be bribed to help the poor by the cheapness of *their* necessaries, while there was no need to bribe them to expend on themselves, save the multiplicity of things to minister to 'the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.' I could scarce believe my eyes, when I saw close by, as the price of a single dress in a shop-window (and in no shop of the fashionable of this world) what would furnish a meal to 7000 poor [g]. Apart, as I said, from all trinketry, one Christian lady was to wear as one of her manifold exterior dresses, what would have removed the gnawings of hunger of some 7000 members of Christ.

Our use of the word 'charity' has deceived us. People have deceived themselves as to their fundamental relation to God as their Creator. They account themselves lords, not stewards, of God's gifts to them. They hold of themselves, as if their broad lands or their comfortable incomes were their own, to be disposed of at their own arbitrary will, until the day shall come, when six feet of earth, the coffin the shroud and the worm, shall suffice them. God wills that 'our charity,' as well as all our acts towards Him, should be with our own free-will; but charity, as well as purity, is an absolute command of God, which men neglect at peril of their souls. It is a command which you must obey, at peril of having the sentence pronounced upon you, 'Depart, ye

[g] In Oxford Street. The price was £60. £60 would, of course, provide 14,400 penny loaves. Hungry children before day-break besiege a soup kitchen, where that sum would, at 2*d.*, provide 7000 real meals.

cursed, unto everlasting fire.' It is a command, which you must obey, as you would not be rebels against the sovereignty of God, and be punished as rebels against Him. It is a command which you must obey, not as if you were doing some great thing, not as if it were an act of generosity; but in humility, as owning your allegiance to your God. You do not, I suppose, think it a great virtue to pay your income-tax honestly. It is simply, not to lie and steal. Charity is a blessed income-tax due to our God, in proportion to our means. It belongs to our condition of life. You speak of dress, equipages, appearance, furniture, as suited to your condition of life. Perhaps some of you have been answering me in your minds, 'We must dress, spend, have this or that elegancy, such or such a table, according to our condition of life.' And I say to you, that there is a condition of life, antecedent to all these, the due to Almighty God, your Sovereign Lord, 'the King of kings and Lord of lords.' And as you must, perforce, discharge your dues to the state, antecedently to your expenditure on your condition, so, as creatures of God, as members of Christ, you have another due upon you, antecedently and in proportion to your expenditure on self, your due to Almighty God, of which not the tax-gatherer but the poor man is the collector; of your payment of which God, year by year, takes account; which, if paid, He will reward a hundredfold; the holding back whereof He will punish, as contempt of Himself and of His love and of the Sufferings of Jesus for you, in Hell.

'It is no almsgiving to give a little out of much.' Those guinea subscriptions out of large incomes are mockery of God; that 'mite,' which one hears of from time to time, is hideous hypocrisy, claiming the praises given to her who gave her all, for what costs nothing.

Dives had this excuse, that it was not an extreme necessity which he neglected. Lazarus was fed by others; yet Dives is in hell. But we know of Lazarus starving and *not* fed; kept out of our sight, often shrinking from it, his cries unheard by us, but heard of God. We know of chronic distress among our artisans; men of the same blood as ourselves, against whom famine tries habitually its strength, so that it is said that 'nothing can starve them.' The weavers of your gay clothing starve, while you make a show of their toil. The women, who fit your dresses, perish untimely (some hard by) by their wasting toil. It is a known class of women, which ekes out its scanty wages by occasional deadly, degrading, sin. Rachel weeps for her children; and now, by a worse lot, *is* 'comforted when they are not'; for it is better to see them stretched out in death, than to hear the cries of their unstilled hunger. And you, which robe are you weaving for yourselves? Are you arraying Christ in the robes wherewith you clothe His poor, that, at the awful Day, your Judge may say, 'With this have ye clad Me; I see you, not in the defilement of your sins, but clothed in the robe of My righteousness; receive the robe of glory, which I have dyed for you with My Own most Precious Blood?' If not, what remains for

you but the robe of everlasting fire, to wreathe round you, your inseparable dress for ever?

One only choice have you, to sacrifice your selfishness, your pride, your love of perpetual comfort, your love of show, your purple and fine linen, and selfish cheer, for the love of Christ; or hereafter yourselves to be the outcasts, whom ye here despise, outcasts from the despised love of God, cast out into outer darkness, the darkness of the lightless lurid fire of hell.

God give us grace, this Lent, to consider our ways; that, if we have learned something of self-sacrifice, we may learn more in that blessed school of giving love for Love, sacrifice hallowed by His blessed Sacrifice; or else that first grace to show mercy according to our means, that we may not be shut out from His Mercy and His Presence for ever!

SERMON XI.

THE THOUGHT OF THE LOVE OF JESUS FOR US, THE REMEDY FOR SINS OF THE BODY.

1 Cor. vi. 15.

'Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ?'

'The Word made Flesh' changed by that act the whole relation of the creature to the Creator. Before, God sustained His creatures in being by His abiding will. The angels, who had chosen Him and abode in their first estate, evermore beheld His face, and, each according to his order among the heavenly intelligences, drank in, through that beatific sight, fresh effluences of love, knowledge, wisdom, holiness from God, Who alone hath all, dispenseth all. But the Creator and the creature were still distinct. God chose man, the lowest of all, to knit together in his nature the Creator and the creature. Could there be envy in heaven, surely the blessed spirits must have envied our race, that God should have chosen us, not themselves, to unite His whole creation to Himself in our nature, not in theirs. I know not what can give us thoughts so intense of the self-forgetting, unenvying love of those blessed spirits, as that they, the higher, the spiritual,

who had ever done the will of the Father, should be willing, nay, (since such was the will of God,) joy to be passed over, and to see us the fallen, the corrupt, the debased, the steeped in sin, preferred to themselves. True! the blessed purpose of God is to unite all things under and in one Head, 'in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth[a],' the happy spirits and our hapless lost race. Their ranks, it is a pious opinion, broken by the fall of the apostate angels, will be filled in their several orders by man, redeemed, restored, sanctified, beatified. Angels and men will be so one around the throne of God, that into all their orders, according to the measure in which men shall have received the grace of God, and have used the grace received, man will be admitted, like and equal to the angels. But even this equality has not been enough for the boundless condescension of the love of God. He was not content to bring back His lost sheep on His shoulders, and invite His friends, the heavenly hosts, who never fell, to rejoice with Him, as though it was His own gain. It sufficed not to the lowliness of His love to do any thing, however exalted, by any act of power or will, out of Himself (so to speak) for us. He willed to give us a closeness of union with Himself, which He gave not to the Seraphim with their burning love, joining in one for ever our poor human nature with His own Divine, man with God. And this for all eternity. This is our prerogative. If, by His mercy, we attain, and are accepted in Him, then, the very last and lowest of all those to whom in that day He

[a] Eph. i. 10.

shall say, 'Come, ye blessed of My Father,' shall have a nearness to Him which no other created intelligence, save man, however filled with God, shall have: we shall have that same nature which our dear Redeemer has united with the Godhead, which in Him is deified. On earth, He was 'not ashamed to call' us 'brethren[b].' In heaven, if we attain, however low in that heavenly society our place through our own ill-deserts may be, we shall still have that special nearness of love. Jesus,—call Him which we will, God-Man or Man-God,—He in whom our nature is united with the Divine by an union closer than any other save that of the Holy Trinity in itself[c]; He, in His human nature, will be our Brother still. Not the penitent robber alone, although before his wondrous gift of penetrating faith stained with the countless sins of his career of blood; not Magdalene alone, 'out of whom Jesus cast seven devils,'—these through their miraculous faith and penitence became indeed glorious saints,—but that poor sinner of us all, whom, after countless sins, God shall save at the last, so as by fire, the lowest and last of all, shall still have that great prerogative of love, that his once deeply stained, now purified, glorified nature will be the same as that of Jesus. Truly, envy must be impossible in heaven, that the blessed angels should not envy us such nearness, which they must have seen on earth so little valued, so forgotten,—alas! this is not enough for our ingratitude,—so trampled on.

This, then, is the first most comprehensive claim of

[b] Heb. ii. 11. [c] St. Bernard.

Jesus on our love. God, who foreknew our fall in Adam, foreordained, in one, the remedy for our fall and the union of His creation with Himself. He knew that we should be the lowest and most debased of His rational creation; and so, to manifest how deep and low His condescending love could reach, He chose our nature, in which to be for ever glorified. This more than compensates,—I say not these short-lived sufferings, yea, though all the sufferings which ever befel any of the race of man could all be gathered into one and super-human strength given to endure it undissolved,—it more than compensates that awful power which we have of losing our souls and God (for we need not lose God or our souls unless we will); nay, it more than compensates that aching memory that we have offended God, that, in lesser things, we cannot, while encompassed with this body of death, still say, 'I have made my heart clean; I am pure from my sin[d].' Wheresoever we shall be in those 'many mansions,' whatsoever our reward, yea, though through our fault we were the last and least in the outermost court of those who see God, this gift of God will abide with us; Jesus, in that special way, is ours; He is our near kinsman, our Brother, our more than Brother. Jesus must love me with a special love, for He has not the nature of angels, but this of mine. Conceive a mendicant, in the poorest outward lot, who had the blood of the most ancient kings, noble as the noblest which human greatness ever dignified. Men would respect his ennobled blood, even in his

[d] Prov. xx. 9.

outward penury. 'A potsherd with the potsherds of the earth!' Our kindred is with Him who is God.. He who took our flesh is in that ineffable, unapproachable glory. Yet even that glory is as nothing. Even heavenly glory, except as it implies nearness to God, would be as nothing. The joy, the bliss, the being of Heaven, is not glory, but love. For 'God is love[e].' And Jesus is ours, will be ours, to love us, and be loved by us in all eternity, not as He deserves but as we can, with that special love of kindred.

And how did He love us? Rather, ask we, how did He not love us? What did He withhold from us, for love of us? His glory? God the Holy Ghost chose no other human word to express it, than that He 'emptied Himself.' He, the fulness, the boundless ocean of all being, He, full of majesty, glory, might, wisdom, holiness, became as though He were nothing, had nothing, of all these. His creatures bandied words with Him, the All-wise, as though they could 'entangle Him in His talk[f].' They blindfolded the All-seeing: they challenged Him to prophesy; and He who saw them through and through, at whose command were 'twelve legions of angels,' He who was and is one with the Father, ended this mortal life, which, being Himself without beginning, for us He vouchsafed to begin, as He began it. He began it an outcast, circumcised as though a child of sin; He ended it as though a blasphemer, perfected in sin, on whom man must execute the judgment of God, 'giving Himself to be numbered with the transgressors[g].' What,

[e] 1 St. John iv. 8. [f] St. Matt. xxii. 15. [g] Isa. liii. 12.

then, did He withhold from us? What *could* He withhold, when He withheld not that which was nearest to His Divine heart, and was willing that all those horrible things should be believed of Him, as if *He* were the blasphemer against His Father. In those dread hours on the Cross, what part of His sacred Body did He reserve from suffering for us? The Psalms fill out the Gospels, and tell us how 'all His bones were out of joint[h]:' limb stretched and strained from limb by the dislocation of the Cross. Or His soul? The three hours of the Passion were but the fulfilment, in act, of the anticipated sufferings of those thirty-three years. By His Divine foreknowledge He saw all: He had all ever present to His soul. Not one pang of soul or body was ever hid from His soul. He had no distractions. For that end came He into the world, and He knew why He was come. 'I have a baptism to be baptized withal,' He saith, 'and how am I straitened till it be accomplished[i]!' He knew, when twelve years old, His Father's business. His forerunner knew that He was 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.' David and Isaiah and Zechariah, His servants the prophets, had foretold circumstances of His Passion. How should not He Himself know it? Being God, He must have known all. Outwardly, He was the Babe, the Child, the Carpenter[k], the Prophet who spake and did the words and works of God. Inwardly, in a waveless mirror, He beheld, not as we do, successively, but in one distinct vision, all the depths of His Passion; not those outward circum-

[h] Ps. xxii. 14. [i] St. Luke xii. 50. [k] St. Mark vi. 3.

stances only, but all which made them what they were to Him, all which He alone could or can know, because in Him alone they could be fulfilled. Those intimations with which He stilled His apostles' eager hopes, were but flashes of light from that serene atmosphere of certain knowledge in which He ever lived. But so, what bursts on us so awfully as 'the hour' of His enemies, and 'the power of darkness[l],' was the one unbroken sight of His life. Day by day during those thirty-three years it drew nearer. *We* have only some indistinct conception of suffering before it comes. When it comes, God mitigates it to us. He saw it all distinctly before it came, and knew that the Father would not mitigate it to Him, when it should come; that it was not fitting that He should mitigate it to Himself. He 'knew from the beginning who should betray Him ... being one of the twelve[m].' He knew the denial, the forsaking even of the beloved disciple for a time; He ever knew of the dread agony in which all His limbs were swathed with 'a winding-sheet of Blood[n];' He ever knew that mysterious loneliness, when it should please the Father 'to make to meet on Him the iniquities of us all[o];' what it would be to bear in one the iniquities of us all, all the sins of all the whole human race. He knew all, and suffered all, day by day, in will, in thought, in steadfast vision, before He suffered in act. He knew even that extremity of agony, when, with-

[l] St. Luke xxii. 53. [m] St. John vi. 64, 71.
[n] Hymn in Paradise for the Christian Soul, P. vi. p. 66, ed. Oxf.
[o] Isa. liii. 6, 10.

holding the consolations of His Divinity from His suffering Humanity, He endured what, but for the support given by His Godhead, His human frame could not endure. His Father's face was hid from His human soul, and, instructing us how to hold to God in extremest darkness, He cried, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' He knew all and withheld no one moment of such suffering for love of us.

We know he did not, could not withhold anything which He *could* suffer for us. He suffered all which human nature could suffer, and yet be holy. He could not know that one great anguish of ours, the memory of sin or hopelessness as to the consequence of sin; but so, He substituted for them the actual bearing of our sins and of His Father's wrath, and that utter forsakenness.

Yet all these had their end. 'He saw,' too, beforehand 'of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied[p].' He saw 'the joy which was set before Him' when He 'endured the Cross[q].' He knew that His Father was glorified, even when He seemed to be forsaken of Him. If one may reverently speak, deeper than all suffering besides must have been the sight of those souls whom He knew that his own Passion could not win to God. Gleams of this inner grief too flash out to us when He 'beheld the' devoted 'city' which would crucify Him, and 'wept over it[r];' when 'He was grieved for the hardness of their hearts[s];' when 'He sighed deeply

[p] Isa. liii. 11. [q] Heb. xii. 2. [r] St. Luke xix. 41.

[s] St. Mark iii. 5; add vii. 34, and the comment in the Christian Year, Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

in His Spirit and said, Why doth this generation seek after a sign[t]?' We know, some of us, some of that deep oppression, when in our crowded metropolis we see the throng upon throng of souls utterly forgetful of God, on whose faces every passion is by turns expressed, in whom everything is seen except some trace of the love of God; and yet there is no one to drag them from the pit, to win them to love Jesus. And *He*, the fountain of love, had in His heart love to which all created love, if it could be gathered and condensed into one, would be as nothing. He knew the love, the joy, which He had prepared for those who would have Him. He knew the hell 'prepared for the devil and his angels' to which He should have to sentence those who would not have Him, who to the end would say, 'On thy conditions we will have none of Thee.' As he saw Judas all through those years shutting out every grace, steeling himself against every act or word of love, 'a devil[u],' yet so close to Himself; so in all that wild multitude who cried 'Crucify Him! crucify Him!' He saw who would repent, but He saw who would go on unrepentant from wickedness to wickedness till they should perish. He saw how those poor thoughtless boys with whom he was surrounded would, rejecting His apostles, ripen into such a death-crop of wickedness, that the Jewish historian believed that, had the Romans tarried, the city must have been destroyed by the immediate judgment of God[x]. He saw all who would in each age reject Him. He saw how

[t] St. Mark viii. 12. [u] St. John vi. 70. [x] Jos. de B. J. v. 13, 6.

those called by His name would corrupt each other, drag each other down to the pit; how the price of His blood would be rent from Him by those for whom He was to shed it. Unutterable, inconceivable by man must have been that suffering when He bare the sins of the whole world. Yet this had its abundant fruit and contentment of His love. More piercing yet to His divine love must have been the thanklessness of those for whom He died. This wounded His love for the glory of His Father; this grieved His holiness; this, in those who repent not, was remediless. Yet all this ingratitude He beheld, ever present to his soul; He beheld it, and yet He loved us, ungrateful.

Loved us? what doth He now? Has it ever occurred to you to think, my brethren, what Jesus is doing now? You know that He is in that unspeakable glory, that inconceivable joy, sitting in that place where God is most seen in His majesty, and which thence is called His right hand, arrayed with all power in heaven and earth. True! He 'upholdeth all things by the word of His power[y].' Thanks be to Him for the mercies of His Providence. He saith Himself, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work[z];' sustaining in being by the continued operation of His will the whole order of created things, which exist, not by laws alone, as if laws were their creator, but by Him and for Him, their Author. He governeth also the Church, sanctifying her by His presence, upholding His truth in her, enlarging, chastening, renewing, pouring new life into her, receiving into Himself each new member

[y] Heb. i. 3. [z] St. John v. 17.

of her, the infant or the convert, by virtue of His sacred promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world[a].' But I would ask you something nearer to ourselves individually. Has it been a matter of habitual thought to you what Jesus doth for us individually; what He so doth, that it is, in a manner, said to be His life? You will any how have remembered now. 'Who ever liveth to make intercession for us[b].' 'Ever liveth to': what less can this mean than that this is His unceasing act in heaven; this, His life of love for us; this, reverently to speak, the object of His present Being there? There He liveth, as 'He who *was* dead, and is alive for evermore[c],' in that self-same Body, which for us He took, which for us was crucified, which for us bore the prints of the nails and of the spear. As He died, so He arose; as He arose, so He ascended; as He ascended, so shall He also descend, in like manner as the Apostles saw Him go into heaven[d]. When He cometh again to judge, 'every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him[e].' They shall behold Him, as their sins pierced Him, the Redeemer whom they would not have. The beloved disciple beheld Him, as He is now, in the midst of the throne, bearing the marks of His Passion, 'a Lamb, as it had been slain[f].' Calvary lives on in heaven, and pleads for us still. Our dear Redeemer's Passion is not only an event

[a] St Matt. xxviii. 20.
[b] Heb. vii. 25; ix. 24; Isa. liii. 12; Rom. viii. 34; 1 St. John ii. 1.
[c] Rev. i. 17.
[d] Acts i. 11.
[e] Rev. i. 17.
[f] Rev. v. 6.

which took place 1800 years ago, and on which men dare look coldly back as an event which had been. It lives on still, transfigured in that unspeakable glory. There, on that once veiled brow of majesty, translucent with the light of Deity, are the marks of the thorns which pierced Him. There, are the glorious scars which He shewed to Thomas, now beaming with the light of love, pleading to the Father for us. There, is that once rifted Side, through which from His pierced Heart gushed forth the water and the blood. There they speak for us, sinners. Day by day (for there is no night there [g]) for these more than 1800 years, hour by hour, has Jesus, in that glorified, once wounded Body, pleaded for us.

To plead for us is part of His Being. As well might you conceive of Him, as absent from heaven, whither He has ascended, whence He is to return, as conceive Him intermitting to plead. He changeth not, wearieth not in His love. The best of us more often forget than remember Him. We are distracted by our business, our interests, our earthly aims, our earthly needs; alas, by our vanities and our sins. He forgetteth not us, whom He redeemed at so dear a price. While men forget Him, turn away from His grace, deafen themselves to His voice, drown His secret inspirations, immerse themselves in brutishness, or frivolity, or toil, that they may not hear Him, He remembers them, He intercedes for them; and for His intercession and merits' sake, every grace which still knocks at their hearts for entrance, when all before it

[g] Rev. xxii. 5.

have been rejected, is given them. Once He merited for us, in those dark dread hours upon the Cross. Ever since, in every successive generation, He has gained for each individual in our whole race, our every grace. Whether we are using, or whether any is shutting out His grace, he owes to that all-prevailing intercession every grace which he has had, or that last grace, that he is not yet reprobate.

And all this, my brethren, has been, is, shall continue to be done for us through the body. By taking our flesh, our whole human nature, soul and body, God the Son gave us, in His own Person, that special prerogative of nearness to Himself. That all-holy, meritorious Passion was wrought through the sufferings of His all-holy Body on the Cross. That continued intercession is made through that pierced but all-glorious Body at the right hand of God.

But then with what sacredness does this invest our bodies, my brethren! Limb by limb they are the same bodies as that which God the Son took, which for us was crucified, which now is in glory at the right hand of God. All sin is misery, because it is rebellion against so loving a Father; all aggravated sin has this deeper misery, that it does, in fact, make a mock and sets at nought the Cross of Christ. Sins of the flesh have yet this special misery, that they degrade that body which Jesus took, degrade it below the beasts which perish. To sin as to the flesh is to insult Christ. It is to insult Him, because they are the like bodies to that which He took and glorified, but also because He has made these, our very own

bodies, His. His they are, because He bought them at so dear a price; His they are, because in baptism we put on Christ [h]; His they are, because by His gift, the gift of the Holy Ghost, they are the temples of the Holy Ghost [i], the dwelling-place of the Trinity, as He says, 'We will come unto him, and make our abode in him [k];' His they are, because 'Now are we the sons of God [l],' being made members of Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; His they are, because He has said, 'He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him [m].'

Trials you have or will have, my sons. But trials which are only of God's allowing injure neither body nor soul. He will give the victory who allows them. He who, probably under the self-same trial, said to His great apostle St. Paul, 'My grace is sufficient for thee; My strength is made perfect in weakness [n],' will suffice for thee, He the Omnipotent. But in all the experience which in these many years I have had in the trials and difficulties of the young, I have mostly found that the trials *began* from their own wills, from curiosity, from example, from imagination, antedating far the time when, in God's providence, those trials through which He would have led them safely would come, forming a new trial to themselves, not in, but contrary to, the way of nature, and aggravating oftentimes exceedingly those trials which, in the way of nature, would have come to them. Imagination, corrupted by corrupt reading, corrupt speaking,

[h] Gal. iii. 27. [i] 1 Cor. vi. 19. [k] St. John. xiv. 23.
[l] 1 St. John iii 2. [m] St. John vi. 56. [n] 2 Cor. xii. 9.

corrupt hearing, corrupt sight, has too often defiled the soul where the Holy Ghost dwelt, divided the will, or decided it to rebel, long ere it was any question of any other sin. One who has so acted upon and bent to evil his own will, dare not speak of his trials as given him, as men speak, 'by the God who made him.' They come to him as he has unmade himself. Whatever they are, they are aggravated often to a fierceness which he had never known, had he not, alas! kindled his own fire. From some temptations, and those most desolating to body, mind, and soul, he might have been wholly free.

But now, my son, if thou art liable to temptation, from which thou mightest have been blessedly free, or over which thou mightest have had, by God's grace, an easy victory, the experience which I have learnt from advice to others, may be useful to thee. Observe well, whence mostly thy temptation begins now; from imagination? or from the eye? or from past memories? or from over-fulness of food? For there the entrance on thy battle lies. It is for thy soul. You know those words of God, 'when I fed them to the full, they assembled themselves by troops—[o].' You remember the experience expressed by the heathen proverb, 'sine Cerere et Baccho—' It is not my experience only; it has an apostle's sanction. If you would use the same self-discipline to gain 'an incorruptible crown[p],' which those use who for victory in a race are 'temperate in all things,' very much trial might still be saved you. I am not setting before you now hard things; I am

[o] Jer. v. 7. [p] 1 Cor. ix. 25.

not even speaking of the fasting which our blessed Lord says His disciples[q] would use—very much temptation as this, as well as every other precept of Christ, saves to those who obey Him,—I am speaking only of that self-discipline which your companions at times use, in order to fit their frames for a race. That moderate use of God's creatures which He gives us for food, and that bodily exercise, which keep the body in a tempered, unluxuriant state, save the soul from many trials. I have, I think, never known a case in which, after victory for a time, there came one of those sad relapses, but that carelessness or remissness as to prayer, and some sudden over-repletion of the body with food and wine on the one hand, or imagination on the other, were the proximate occasions of it.

At the beginning, any distraction is lawful. In temptations of this kind, flight is true warfare, is victory. Elude any trial thou canst, in whatsoever lawful way thou canst. To put yourself under circumstances where the sin cannot be committed, until the fever is over; to occupy yourself so as to forget it, to use, as I said, bodily exercise, to interest yourself in any lawful object, are at times helpful. When imagination is busy, (you know how the very earliest Christians, those close on the apostles' times, used the sign of the Cross[r],) I know nothing so powerful in removing

[q] St. Luke v. 35.

[r] 'In all our travels and movements, in all our coming in and going out, in putting on our shoes, at the bath, at the table, in lighting our candles, in lying down, in sitting down, what ever employment occupieth us, we mark our forehead with the sign of the cross.'—

evil imaginations, distractions, bad memories and thoughts, as to retrace on the forehead, the seat of thought, the baptismal cross. Used religiously, I never knew it fail. I have known the thoughts by which a person was beset so entirely scattered, that he was not even conscious what they had been. The soul was like a clean sheet, on which every trace had been utterly effaced; like a serene blue sky, from which every cloud had disappeared.

But in the trial itself, especially in that sort which (those whom it concerns will know what I mean) comes when no one is by, no help or possibility of human help for the time is there, no way of eluding it, but the conflict must come; I know but of one

Tertullian de Coronâ, v. 3, p. 165, O. T. This treatise is probably A.D. 201.

'Let us not then be ashamed of the cross of Christ; but though another hide it, do thou openly seal it on thy brow; that the devils beholding that princely sign, may flee far away trembling. But make thou this sign when thou eatest and drinkest, sittest or liest down, risest up, speakest, walkest; in a word, on every occasion; for He who was here crucified, is above in the heavens.'—*St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures*, iv. 14, p. 40, O. T.

'Let us not then be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the Cross our seal, made with boldness by our fingers on our brow, and in everything; over the bread we eat and the cups we drink; in our comings in and goings out; before our sleep; when we lie down and when we awake; when we are in the way, and when we are still. Great is that preservative: it is without price, for the poor's sake; without toil, for the sick, since also its grace is from God. It is the sign of the faithful, and the dread of the devils: for He has *triumphed over them in it, having made a show of them openly*; for when they see the Cross, they are reminded of the Crucified; they are afraid of Him who hath *bruised the heads of the dragon.* Despise not the Seal, because of the freeness of the gift; but for this the rather honour thy Benefactor.'—*Lect.* xiii, 36, pp. 161, 162, O. T.

effectual remedy—to clasp the hands together, and pray earnestly to God for help. All the outward resources which I recommended out of books were forgotten when they were most needed. No fear of God's temporal punishments of the sin, nor even the commencement of those punishments, availed. Fearful and common those punishments are, which I have seen and known and read of. I have known of manifold early death; I have seen the fineness of intellect injured; powers of reasoning, memory impaired; nay, insanity oftentime, idiotcy; every form of decay of mind and body; consumption too often, torturing death, even of a strong frame. Lesser degrees of these punishments were God's warning voice: at first bodily growth checked, eye-sight perhaps distressed or impaired; that fine, beautiful, delicate system which carries sensation through the whole human frame, in whatever degree, harmed, and for the most part, in that degree irreparably. When these warnings were neglected, further decay, with scarce an exception, visibly followed. In vain I repeated, warned; said how my very brain had reeled with the histories of these visitations of God on that sin. All failed—faded away. That prayer with hands clasped to God I never knew to fail, for God was not called to aid in vain. If the trial lasted, the victory was more complete. I knew one, now many years ago, who, under an almost supernatural power of temptation, had to pray to God, not thrice only, but for seven days and six nights, and at the end the temptation left him as though it had never been, and he told me afterwards it did not again return.

And when thou so prayest, my son, think how Jesus hallowed this poor body; think how He suffered in this body for love of us. Look up at thy Redeemer, as for thee He hung upon the Cross; or as for thee He intercedes in heaven. Behold Him there, 'from the sole of the foot even unto the head[s],' made for our sins, as we had by our sins unmade ourselves; 'all wound and bruise and oozing sore,' 'no soundness in that tender frame.' Look well at that holy frame, racked on that hard bed of the Cross; look at every limb tightened, distended, dislocated; that sacred Back furrowed with those harrowing lashes; those Feet, which went about doing good, rent with those nail-pierced gashes; see those Hands, whose touch healed and saved, which were even then stretched out wide to bless the whole world, wrung with that riving iron, and torn yet more by the weight of His holy Body suspended by them; but above all, look at that thorn-crowned Head, on Whose radiance the Angels gaze with joy: look at it, scarred with the bruises from that rough felon band, bearing yet the shame of the spitting, drooping with its own weight on that breast of love, stained with the purple streams of His own Blood; and that yet open, mild, forgiving Eye, which looked with pity on Mary Magdalene, and won the blaspheming robber to sue for pardon from his Lord. How does that calm full orb of love speak to thee? Does it not say to thee, 'Poor wanderer, this have I endured for love of thee; I loved thee and gave

[s] Isa. i. 6.

Myself for thee[t]; I thought of thee, and knew how ill thou wouldst requite My love, yet still I love thee. Love Me at least now.' Wilt thou not look up to Him and say, 'By Thy Grace henceforth I will love Thee. Bind me by Thy love, that I may love Thee, Lord; let me rather die than again profane the body, which Thou didst so redeem, and wound Thy love.'

Or, if thou art so drawn, look up, look up above all those suns upon suns which were made by Him; look to that light unapproachable, where God dwelleth[u], and gaze on that Glorious Form at the right hand of God. All else is spirit. 'God is a spirit[x].' All the choirs of angels, cherubim and seraphim, thrones, dominions, powers,—the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, are all spirits. *One* Body is there, above all, adorned by all, loved by all with adoring love, beauteous above all created beauty, shining above all created light, paling all by the glory of His light, for 'the Lamb,' Scripture saith, 'is the Light thereof[y].' A light streams through that Deitate Body, which absorbs all created light, (as amid the full radiance of the sun we see the moon's pale light no more,) the light of the Godhead united in one Person with the Manhood of Jesus. There, with a special lustre of their own, stream forth the rays of Divine light and love from those two pierced Hands, those once wounded Feet, that opened Side and Heart.

[t] 'Who loved me and gave Himself for me.' Gal. ii. 20.
[u] 1 Tim. vi. 16. [x] St. John iv. 24.
[y] Rev. xxi. 23.

There, at that moment, the moment of thy temptation, they intercede for thee; there they have interceded for thee, when thou wastedst their intercession. *There*, is that human Eye resting still in love upon thee. There it sees thy trials, thy fainting heart, thy longings to amend, thy falls, thy repentance, thy renewed falls, and still it has loved, still loves thee. Those glorious scars in all that Majesty of heaven, seem to say to us, 'So do I love you that I would come down from heaven again, to be crucified again for you, if so I could win one soul more to love God.'

He is not ashamed to wear in heaven the tokens of His humiliation; be not thou ashamed of Him and His service. Look to Him; catch, in mind, that loving, all glorious Eye, as it beholds thee, and say, 'Saviour, save me; let me not again degrade the body which Thou hast vouchsafed to take, which Thou hast so glorified, and in which Thou vouchsafest still to remember me, Thy poor sinner, redeemed with Thy precious Blood.'

Look, in which way thou willest, to Jesus; and He who, while on earth, touched the poor fevered body, and 'rebuked the fever, and forthwith it departed from[z]' the sufferer, will slake any fever of thine, Only, will with thine whole heart to be freed; will to be *that* for which the Father created thee, the Son redeemed thee and intercedeth for thee, the Holy Ghost sanctifieth thee. Remember that He willeth to 'fashion this our[a]' now 'vile body, that it may be made like unto His glorious body,' and resolve by His

[z] St. Luke iv. 39. [a] Phil. iii. 21.

grace to degrade no more the Body which He so longs to glorify with Himself. Be earnest, and in place of those things which thou thyself hatest afterwards, destroying thyself alone, or others for whom with thee Christ did die, there will enter in 'some sweetness of things eternal,' the foretaste of everlasting joy in thine own Lord.

SERMON XII.

THE SACREDNESS OF MARRIAGE.

EPHESIANS v. 33.

'This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.'

GREAT indeed and holy is the mystery of marriage[a]. Great and poor are all the things of man. Poor are the things of man, as they belong to this earth; great are they, as they are the shadows of things unseen, the foretaste, in some measure, of things eternal.

Great is the mystery of holy union. God Himself Is, the Holy Blessed Three, and yet is One. His eternal Being is one, simple, indivisible Essence, without parts, without passion. The Three Persons in the Co-Equal Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *are* eternally; the Son everlastingly begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceeding from both; yet Father Son and Holy Ghost are perfectly One. 'They are not three Gods, but One God.' And this is the eternal bliss of God, that, although Three in Person, They are in perfectness One God, and 'God is love.'

[a] Preached in the Communion Service, after a marriage, as contemplated in the Marriage Service.

In some shadow of this oneness God willed eternally to make us, His creatures. Even in Paradise God instituted that two should be one. He made the oneness the closer, in that He took from Adam part of his very self; that as, in the All-holy Trinity, the Son is from the Father co-eternally, that oneness should be shadowed out, as far as it could be, in His creature; and the woman was formed not apart, as other creatures were, not as a daughter only, but of the very substance, and strength, and firmness of the man. And man and woman were again to become one. But for the fall, there would have been no passion in love and loving intercourse; no shame, no distress, no pain in child-bearing; but there would have been perfect union of love. For in Paradise too God said, 'They twain shall be one flesh.' One they were, by origin one of the other; one they should be in their offspring; one they should be, in that they were to live through life for one another alone; one they should be in the oneness of mutual love, and their one will, whereby their souls should be knit together in one; one through the blessing of Almighty God, Who made them what He declared them, no more twain, but one.

After the fall, all was changed. The fire and poison of the forbidden fruit ran through the whole of man. What was innocent and pure then, would be shameless now. There was nothing then to be ashamed of, because they had not then by sin changed what God had made. Man rebelled against God, and so was no longer master of himself. Shame of himself was the

punishment of his pride against God. He lost the glory and fearlessness of his innocence, and veiled his shame, until his nature should again be blessedly restored, and our vile body be conformed to the glorious Body of Him Who shall restore us.

Yet even thus God made the penalty of our sin, our sin's remedy. Labour, weariness, and toil, are the discipline of the body, and the rest and health of the mind. Labour according to the will of God is, all but the contemplation of God Himself, the happiest condition of man. 'The desire unto the husband,' which corrected woman's wrongful tempting of Adam and her wrongful power over him in leading him to sin, became the bond of mutual love; protecting, guiding, cherishing, on the husband's part; to the wife, the guardian of humility, unspeakable tenderness, the deepest yearning of love. 'Sorrow in conception,' which was the penalty of the pleasure of the forbidden fruit, was softened by the hope of the promised Seed Who was to bruise the serpent's head.

Thenceforth, marriage looked on to Him Who was to come. Holy women longed that God would give them children, because the victory over him who had seduced them, was to be given through the seed of the woman. And when He came, a far deeper union succeeded.

Then there began a three-fold union of God with man, of which that union of marriage was the image. First there was the union of God the Word with our flesh, whereby He betrothed indissolubly to Himself our human nature, joining it in one Person with His

Godhead, so that God and Man were one Christ. God the Son, Who as God fills all space and all eternity, liveth and shall live for ever as God Man in perfect oneness. This union cemented that further union shadowed out in the Canticles, whereby the whole number of the redeemed should be one mystical body, united through His Spirit and His sacraments with Him their Head. This union He shadowed forth when He formed Eve from Adam's side. From the Saviour's precious Side gushed forth, in His Passion, those two Sacraments, water and blood, by which the Church is formed. But since what Christ does for the whole Church, He, through His indivisible love, does for every soul which He makes His, in that same awful hour He, with the bridal pledge and dowry of His outpoured Blood, espoused to Himself each single soul which, by His love, He should draw unto Himself.

Hence, in the Gospel, marriage is a mystery, blessed in itself, when lived in according to the law and will of Christ; blessed, and holy, and mysterious, in that it is an image of a mystery as much above itself as heaven is above earth, yea God above man, the union of the Church or the single soul with Christ. 'This is a great mystery,' says St. Paul, 'but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.' The oneness of marriage shadows forth that spiritual oneness whereby Christ and the whole company of the redeemed are so one, that He vouchsafes to speak of Himself as not complete without them; Himself 'the Head of the Church,' 'His Body, the fulness of Him Who filleth all in all.'

Blessed, thrice blessed, they, to whom Christ alone sufficeth, the one aim of whose being is to live to Him and for Him. For Him they adorn themselves; His eyes Alone they desire to please through His graces in them; Him they long to serve without distraction; at His Feet they ever sit; to Him they speak in their inmost souls, to Him they hearken. He is their light, their love, their holy joy; to Him they ever approach with trustfulness; Him they consult in all things, on Him they wait; Him they love, even because they love Him; and desire nothing from Him but His love, desire no love but only His. Blessed foretaste of life eternal, to desire nothing on earth but the life of Angels and the new song; to be wholly His, Whom her soul loveth, and He, the Lord of Angels, to be wholly her's, as she says, 'I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine.'

Yet blessed too are all who, in whatever outward lot, are with virgin souls espoused unto Christ, in faith entire, and grounded hope, and fervent charity. Blessed, whether married or unmarried, are the pure in heart, who seek to make their souls a bridal chamber for Christ, fitted by His grace for His indwelling by His Spirit.

But since marriage is this high and wondrous image of the union of the soul with Christ, how holily ought it to be compassed, entered upon, lived in!

What is the pattern, and measure, and model of the mutual love of the husband and the wife? What but the love of Christ Himself, and of His redeemed Church for Him, its Head? 'Husbands, love your wives, even

as Christ also loved the Church.' St. Paul stops short in no created being; He lifts us to Him Who is God and Man, the All-holy, the All-loving. And how then did Christ love the Church? More than Himself, more than His own life. 'He gave Himself for her.' In what condition did Christ love the Church? For her beauty, her goodness, her holiness, her graces? Nay, ye know well what this our human nature was, before Christ came, how foul, how defiled, how full of all evil and deformity. And to what end did He love her? That He might array her with all beauty, that He might do away with every spot or wrinkle, and make her like a bride adorned for her Husband, holy and without blemish.

This, plainly, cannot belong to us. Christ is the pattern to us, not as to power or gifts of grace, but in His love. 'Love your wives,' he saith, 'as Christ loveth the Church.' The love of Christ was with power; we cannot imitate the power, but we can, through His grace, imitate the love. Christ loved in the Church an undying beauty, which He would give her. He loved all souls, not for what they were, but for what He should make them. We love after the pattern of Christ, when we love in one another that deathless beauty of the soul which Christ gives; when we love, in despite of defects, which Christ will, by His grace, remove; when we are patient and forbearing with what Christ has not as yet removed, looking and longing for His transforming grace now, yet onward still to that 'mighty working whereby He shall subdue all things unto Himself.' To love the

beauty of the body, save as the soul shines through it, is not to love like Christ. Poor, fading, a shadow only of that which shall never fade, is any beauty of the body. Beautiful above the stars of heaven, more piercing than their lustre, and undying, is the beauty of the soul in grace. Look then to that in one another which shall live on and shine on in the heavenly courts, when all which is of this earth shall be dissolved, yea when what is now of this earth, but from our Maker's Hands, not from our marring of His work, shall be transformed into the glory of Christ.

Live then, day by day, for that Day; love, day by day, with that Day before you; love, as ye shall wish that ye had loved in that Day; love that which shall abide in that searching Day, when wood, hay, stubble shall be burnt up. But love, meanwhile, with a tender, forbearing love, as Christ is tender and compassionate with us, bearing with our decay, and beholding us as what, by His grace, we shall one day be; cherishing one another, encouraging one another, helping one the other along the narrow road which leadeth unto Him; denying, each, self for the other, as Christ loved our souls more than Himself, in that He poured out His own soul to death for us. This love shall grow with years, as the love of Christ and the grace of Christ, which is the beauty of the soul, grows and is enlarged in each. This love shall be refined and purified by sickness and the wasting of the body, as the soul shall, through God's chastening, purifying Hand, lay aside its dross, and glow the more with the beauty of the grace of Christ. This love shall not decay, much

less die, even after the body's death. For souls, which are united in Christ, shall not be separated from Christ; they shall live on still, one in the one love of Christ. In heaven there shall be 'neither marrying nor giving in marriage,' but there shall be love; love, pure, holy, happy, like that of the angels of God in heaven, who are ever filled with the love of God, ever behold the Face of God, are ever over-streamed with the radiancy of that love, which issues forth from the eternal Fountain of love.

So may the love in this life be the prelude of the love in life eternal. Daily, hourly, while we are in this church, speaking, or listening, or praying, we are hasting on towards our eternal home. 'The fashion of this world passeth away.' Love then with a love which shall not pass away; a love of Christ, from Christ, in Christ, to Christ. Kindle in one another the love of eternity; meditate together on the things of heaven, the glories of heaven, the joy, the peace, the purity of heaven; do what ye do with the thought of heaven, as 'laying up treasure in heaven;' so while ye live here, ye shall 'have' already 'eternal life;' so shall love here be perfected there, where is the true substance of what we have in shadows here, the abiding fulness of that transporting, deifying love, where God shall be All in all, and we shall be like Him Who is love, for we shall, 'accepted in Christ Jesus,' 'see Him as He is.' Amen.

SERMON XIII.

THE BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

St. Matt. xii. 31.

'Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.'

Anxious and awful is at any time the office of speaking of the Divine mysteries. For 'the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.' And how should we, with so little portion of His Spirit, venture into such depths? How must we not dread by any words of ours to take from the depth of such deep solemn warning as this! How can we hope so to draw out from the very depths of the Divine mercy and justice, whereby He pardoneth the penitent and yet leaveth some impenitent at last in their hardness of heart, such a tempered teaching, as may neither 'sadden the hearts which God hath not made sad,' nor yet lower our thoughts of the awfulness of His Majesty! Truly 'the well is deep,' and we have 'nothing to draw with,' and 'a great stone lieth upon' it, unless He, the True Jacob, roll it away for us, and give us to drink of the living water, even the Spirit of Truth.

And yet would we be silent, how may not these

words press heavily on tender consciences; nay, perhaps scarcely any can have heard words so awful and not have said at some time, 'Lord, is it I?' perhaps scarce any have not at some time longed to know that they are free from guilt so hopeless. Not in one way do these terrible thoughts come, but sometimes brought by the voice of conscience, sometimes as a suggestion of despair from the evil one, most often perhaps, when they take any deep hold, as a mercifully severe warning against the approaches to sins, which are the forerunners of the unpardonable sin, even as the thunders and lightnings and thick cloud upon Mount Sinai were a warning to Israel lest it should break through and perish. And perhaps in one of these ways the doubt as to the nature of this sin has perplexed some even of us. Not of my own choice, if I may so say, have I been led to speak on a subject so awful and of such great difficulty, and so I may the rather hope from His mercy, Whose Providence, as I trust, brought me to it, and through your prayers for yourselves and for each other, that what I may say may neither sadden any faithful heart, nor yet withdraw any healthful fear. For God both within and without does impress very awful fears upon our souls; in the history of the Bible and in those around us, and on our own consciences, in His sudden visitations or enduring chastisements of sin; in the awful change in the soul following upon a single sin, the sudden falls of those who once seemed faithful, the strange mystery that some who began to live in that 'faith which worketh by love,' and lived for a

while faithfully and righteously, were not removed before they fell into the sin in which they died[a].

It has been then ever with great reverence and awe that the holy fathers ever spoke of this very solemn subject. St. Augustine[b], although he had 'often knocked and sought and asked,' long avoided to speak of it, until at last a special call seemed to invite him; St. Athanasius[c], when enquired of, shrunk once and again from answering, fearing lest, 'although immersing his mind into it, and beginning to search deeply, he should not be able to draw forth the deep meaning which lay therein. At last he essayed, having first much prayed the Lord, Who sat upon the well and walked upon the water.' And thus although, of ourselves, it were rather fitting that we should be silent altogether, the mercy of the Lord enables us to tell you, how they whom He had so instructed, understood His words.

First then it may be said, what the sin is not. It cannot be any sin from which men ever have repented; for wherever God has given repentance, He has given pardon; no sin, then, which has ever been repented of, is the unpardonable sin. And yet what very awful and exceeding sins have been pardoned or might have been pardoned! We know that Cain was 'of the wicked one and slew his brother'; but that first fratricide was not yet hopeless, since God still graciously pleaded with him, and thereby opened to him,

[a] St. Aug. de Dono Persev.
[b] Serm. ad Pop. 71. ed. Ben. (21. Oxf. Tr.) § 8.
[c] Ep. iv. ad Serap. 8.

as to Adam, the door of repentance, asking him 'Where is Abel thy brother?' It was not closed, until he finally desponded of God's mercy. Manasseh 'made his son to pass through the fire,' 'did wickedly above the' very 'Amorites,' 'seduced' the people of God 'to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord had destroyed before' them, 'shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another;' 'the Lord spake unto' him, yet he 'would not hearken[d].' But 'when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers and prayed unto Him, and He was intreated of him.' The exceeding sinfulness of Manasseh seems recorded only to show the still more exceeding long-suffering of God. Not even the shedding of innocent blood 'which the Lord hateth,' not the seducing of His people, not even obstinate impenitence *for a time*, were as yet the unpardonable sin. Simon Magus sinned grievously against the Holy Ghost, wishing with money to 'purchase the Gift of God,' that he might make merchandise of It. We know that at the last he repented not, the first among the seducers of the brethren, and that he perished by an awful death, at the prayer of the Apostles of this day, through the sudden judgment of God. Yet perilous as his state even then was, repentance was still open, since St. Peter bade him, 'Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.' How have even eminent saints been set forth

[d] 2 Kings xxi. 2 Chron. xxxiii.

as examples of recovery from very grievous sin! For a year David slumbered on after his two exceeding sins; and what sins in one so early called, so long preserved, blessed so exceedingly, by whose lips the Holy Ghost had spoken! And yet, awakened at the Prophet's piercing rebuke, deep as were his after chastisements, deeper his heart's inward grief, scarce had the confession burst forth from his heart, but he was forgiven. And of the two chief Apostles, whose birthday we this day celebrate and their entrance into the joy of their Lord, St. Paul says that, before grace, he was 'a blasphemer,' blasphemed the very Name of Christ whereby alone he could be saved, and 'caused' those who were His, 'to blaspheme.' Not after the fulness of grace was St. Peter's fall, yet after what nearness to our Lord! After he had beheld His glory, and been with Him in the Holy Mount, had been 'eyewitness of His Majesty, when He received from God The Father honour and glory,' had 'heard the Voice from Heaven, from the excellent glory, "This is My Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased,"' yea, had himself seen His Eternal Birth of the Father, revealed to Him by The Father, been pronounced 'blessed,' been taken into Himself, as, through his confession, the rock in the Rock, the foundation in that Foundation, which is Himself, had received the keys of Heaven, he denied his Lord, the Saviour of all, Whom he had before confessed, 'with Whom' he had 'persevered in His temptations,' the chosen witness of His Agony and humiliation as before of His unspeakable Glory, Whose

Body and Blood[e] he had received; 'no light,' says a father, 'but a very exceeding sin[f];' such a sin that, when it was committed, not at the voice of a little maid, but wrung through the force of very exceeding tortures, seemed[g] to have some shadow of the unpardonable sin. The very Crucifixion of our Lord shut not out repentance, not of the people only, but of their very rulers, who moved them to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. Some mitigating plea to God's mercy there was even for them; 'I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers;' even for them was our Lord's prayer heard, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' 'The Blood[h] Which phrenzied they shed, believing they drank.' The robber who blasphemed and repented was the first-fruits of the Redemption. What seems more direct blasphemy against God the Holy Ghost, than to deny Him to be God? and yet heretics who have so blasphemed Him have in multitudes (a father[i] says) repented and been restored. So great is the loving-kindness of our God, so does the lofty all-encircling Heaven of His love enfold us and all the sins, which we commit beneath, within, against, It.

Then, further, for ourselves, no course even of sin, no act of deadly sin, following even upon a course of sin, if it admits the pang of penitence, shuts out from pardon. What is really dead, feels not. No *past* sin

[e] St. Chrys. Hom. i. de Pœnit. § 3.
[f] Id. Ib. Hom. iii.
[g] St. Cypr. Ep. 16. § 2. Oxf. Tr.
[h] St. Aug. Serm. 67. § 4. et passim.
[i] St. Chrys. see also St. Aug. Serm. 71. § 5, 6.

hinders from penitence. 'Remark,' says a father[k], 'all the sins which God threatens; thou wilt at once see that they are *present* sins.' Feel thou thyself dry, seared, impenitent, without feeling, stupified, bewildered, yea, if any were harassed with the spectres of former sins, so that all holy truth at times came before him as a dream, and he could himself scarcely tell what he believed, or whether he believed at all, or did he as the sad heritage of his sin seem to himself abandoned as it were to Satan, his very dwelling-place, left of God and 'the cage of every unclean and hateful bird,' unable to distinguish whether blasphemous or impure or rebellious or hateful or hopeless thoughts be of his own mind, or the darts of the evil one driven through him,—be this or all beside which can be imagined miserable, be he from head to foot covered with the ulcers of his sins, so that he seem to himself all one wound, unbound, unclosed, unsoftened, a very living death; yet if he have any longing to be delivered from the body of this death, if out of this deep he can but cry, though not in words yet by the agony of the heart, 'Lord, save me, I perish,' he has not committed the unpardonable sin. The faintest longing to love is love; the very dread to miss for ever the Face of God is love; the very terror at that dreadful state where none can love, is love. As yet those around may say, 'Lord, he stinketh;' the heavy stone of earthly sins may lie very heavy upon him, and he lie motionless, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, so that he cannot

[k] St. Pacian, Ep. iii. § 34. Oxf. Tr.

even approach unto Jesus, and his eyes wrapped round that he should not see Him, yet He whom he cannot seek, may yet, at the prayer of the friends of Christ, seek *him*; that Voice which awakeneth the dead can reach him yet, and he may hear the Voice of the Son of God, and, hearing, live. The smouldering flax may seem extinct, yet if there be this one spark left, He can again kindle it into a burning flame, glowing with His love.

And now, to approach the sacred text itself. Every step is full of awe, when we speak of man's sinfulness and God's overwhelming love. Yet ye are, we trust, in earnest, my brethren, and would hear of God's mercies, only to magnify His love towards you, and kindle that zeal for all such as, outcasts in man's sight, may yet be brought with you to praise Him, through Whose grace alone it is, that any are not even as they. How should not every part of that mercy be full of mystery and beyond all thought, stretching out into infinity every way, in length and breadth and depth and height, infinite as His love, whereby God became Man to win His rebellious and fallen creatures from death to life, from hatefulness to His love? And here, because Satan would ever tempt to despair of God's mercy those whom he has tempted, through presuming upon it, to sin, our Good Lord accompanies the awful sentence on that one sin which hath no forgiveness, with the largest, almost boundless, assurance of mercy on all besides. As if (if we may so speak reverently) His infinite love, hemmed in on this one side by that which could not receive It,

poured itself forth the more abundantly wherever It could be received. There is perhaps nowhere else in Holy Scripture so large a declaration of God's forgiveness, as here where mention is made of the one sin which finally shuts it out. 'I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,' or in part still more emphatically in St. Mark, 'all blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme.' Ye know, my brethren, what very awful blasphemies against our Blessed Lord's sacred Person the Gospels relate; so awful are they, that we may well shrink from naming them to you and wounding your ears, save when Holy Scripture itself recites them, or ye would meditate on them in awe at His love; yet all, He says with such loving solemnity, '*I* say unto you,' all shall be forgiven. He against Whom they were uttered, He Who hath power to forgive sin, He the Righteous Judge of quick and dead, Himself says, 'all shall be forgiven.' And not these only, but since in that woe, there is no mention of 'sins'—for He says, 'All sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven,' but He says, 'the blasphemy' only, not 'sin' against the Holy Ghost—then even sins, committed directly against God the Holy Ghost, are not excepted; and yet more, not even all blasphemies against that Holy Being are unpardonable; for He says, '*the* blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.' So then, while all else, even blasphemies against His very Majesty, are forgiven, one sort only of exceeding malignity, '*the* blasphemy' above all others, is retained. Sin indeed against

the Holy Ghost has the more awful character, from His very nearness to us. 'Undivided[l] indeed is the Holy and Blessed and Perfect Trinity,' and 'He[m] Who hath the Image of The Son, that is, The Spirit, hath through It The Son also and The Father Who is in Him,' and 'in Him[n] when He cometh, is the full Presence of both The Father and The Son.' Yet since it is the Holy Ghost Who in Holy Scripture is declared to be the especial Indweller of the human heart, since He is the seal through Whom God impresses upon us His likeness, He dwelleth in us as His temple, in His Substance, and is thereby the very Author and Principle of our sanctification[o], sin against Him, in ourselves or others, has in it a more awful deadliness. And yet of *sin* against the Holy Ghost there is no mention here; and, even further, we seem permitted to explain the larger expressions of St. Mark and St. Luke, 'he that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost,' by the more restrained words in St. Matthew, '*the* blasphemy against the Holy Ghost;' so that the meaning of all should be exactly the same, 'he that blasphemeth with *the* especial blasphemy.' For, in God's mercy, we know that persons who have very grievously blasphemed, denying His Very Being and Godhead, have had the gift of repentance and forgiveness. And so again we seem allowed to follow the great body of authority, who think that St. Mark's words, 'Because they said, He hath an unclean Spirit,' assign not

[l] St. Ath. c. Serap. iv. 12.
[m] St. Cyr. Thes. 1. 33. p. 336.
[n] St. Ambr. de Sp. S. i. 10.
[o] See Pet. de Trin. 7. 13. 21.

the occasion only that our Lord so spake, but the meaning of His words. As St. Athanasius says[p], 'The Saviour when before He rebuked them for many sins—yet exhorted them to repent; but when they said, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub," He speaketh of this no longer as a sin, but as blasphemy so great, that on those who dared this, punishment must come, without escape or pardon.' The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was then not one sort of guilt, but many in one; it was the guilt of those, who had the very Presence of their Lord, who witnessed His Love and Holiness, who saw the Power of God, but out of envy and malice, obstinately resisted the light, and ascribed that which was the very working of the Spirit of holiness to the 'unclean spirit.' And this sin was in its very nature unpardonable, not because God would not pardon it upon repentance, but because it cut off repentance from itself, turning into sin the very miracles of mercy which should have drawn it to repentance. It was a fruit of such desperate malice, as blinded itself wholly. And yet more exceedingly does the mercy of God exceed our iniquity, if (as fathers of great name have thought) our Lord, in these words, pronounced not their sentence, but still warned them of a sin yet to come, should they still resist the further witness of the Spirit, when the stumbling-block of the humiliation of His Humanity should be withdrawn, and He, from the Right Hand of The Father, should send down the promised Comforter to testify

[p] l. c.

of Him; more marvellous yet, if some even of those who had so blasphemed had repentance unto life[q].

Such then being, according to what may be called a concurrent sense in the Church, the strict nature of the unpardonable sin, was it limited to the time of our Lord's Presence in the flesh, or the fullest Presence of His Spirit in the Church? Could it only be committed in an age of miracles, in the brightest lustre of the Divine light, against the Very Light Himself, and are those of this day wholly free from all peril of it? This can scarcely be; for it can hardly be thought that so very solemn a warning of our Lord, which has by the Holy Ghost been recorded for us in three Gospels, should relate wholly to a past sin, and not in any way belong to us also. The outward form of sin ever varies and shifts; its inward evil principle remains the same. In this sin, the decayed core and substance of the sin was, an impenitent hatred and opposition to the truth, out of envy of Him Who is the Truth, and of those who received It; its final form to attribute the evident work of God, Who Alone is good, to the evil one. The more awful both the sin and the punishment, the more must one withhold one's thought as to any individual; for to think that it has been committed is to think that that person is now in hell. And yet when they, by whom the Holy Ghost spake, condemn an individual without any offer of pardon, it does seem that they were given to foresee that the wickedness was so great and impenitent as to shut out pardon. When at last, upon Alexander, who had 'put away a good

[q] St. Chrys. ad loc Hom. 41. § 3.

conscience,' 'made shipwreck of the faith,' and 'greatly withstood the Apostles' words,' St. Paul pronounces the sentence, 'the Lord reward him according to his works,' it sounds like the final sentence of Him Who says, 'Whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.' Such, seems also the sin of Elymas the sorcerer, whom St. Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, stedfastly gazing upon and seeing his inmost self, pronounced 'the child of the devil, the enemy of all righteousness.' And when, in later times, God has, on the prayer of the Church, suddenly brought to a fearful end, profane mockers and opposers of His truth, as Simon Magus and Julian and Arius, there is again an awful feeling, that theirs had been the unpardoned, unpardonable, sin. Nor less in the dreadful sayings of infidels almost of our own days, when we have seen blasphemy follow upon blasphemy, and dreadful, bitter, hatred of Him Whom they blasphemed, and final impenitence has set its miserable seal upon them.

But this is still wholly removed from us; God in His mercy grant that every shadow of this sin, every avenue and approach to it, may ever be far from every one of us! Still, as no one ever fell at once into extreme sin, our only safeguard from any is to be kept by God's protection from the first steps of the descent to it. And of some sins, akin in guilt to this, St. John seems to speak, sins not unpardonable, yet for which it is very difficult to obtain pardon, when, encouraging to pray for all beside, with the full assurance that 'God will give' us 'life for them that sin not unto death,' He does not give the same confidence in praying

for these. 'There is sin unto death; I do not say that he should pray for it,' i. e. There are sins so ordinarily leading unto death, so deadly in themselves, which but for some special measure of the long-suffering love of God, must end in death, 'I cannot,' the Apostle says, 'so bid you pray for it.' He forbids not prayer, he shuts not out hope, 'yea, let him groan,' says a holy man[r], 'that loveth him. Let him not presume to pray, nor cease to weep. Doth not faith at times obtain whereon prayer presumeth not?' And this is no longer that aggravated blasphemy, proceeding from manifold evils joined in one; it is 'sin;' different from that blasphemy, but not, as it, restrained to one kind only, nor yet named, that we might the more take heed of all grievous sin.

Yet nearer to us still; a common consent of the Church has marked out six several sins as forerunners of the unpardonable sin, which some of us have been accustomed to pray against with our good Bp. Andrewes[s], 'Be merciful, be merciful, spare us, pity us, O Lord, and destroy us not for ever; deliver and save us. Let it not be, O Lord, and that it be not, take from us, O Lord'—and then among other grievous sins, the holy Bishop prays earnestly against these, despair after sinning, presuming upon God's mercy, impenitence for past sin, obstinate purpose to continue in sin, impugning known truth, envy of grace in a brother. For these all involve the rejection of those means whereby God would in His goodness recall us from sin,

[r] St. Bern. de grad. humil. c. ult.
[s] Litany, p. 80. in Tract, 88.

the hope of His mercy, the fear of His judgments, the piercing sting of past sin, the sense of its unprofitableness, the restraint of His truth, the loveliness of His holiness, as seen in others, if not felt in ourselves. They flagrantly resist the pleadings of God's Good Spirit, are direct offences against His goodness and His love.

And yet as ye start back, my brethren, from these completed sinful tempers, ye bear witness that, through the mercy of God, no one fell at once into extreme sin As 'the path of the righteous shineth more and more unto the perfect day' of righteousness in God, so the way of the wicked sinketh, mostly, by slow descent, into thickened darkness. Thin perhaps as the spider's web are the single sins which twine around the sinner, until they bind as a cable. Who cannot trace his bitterest sins to the petty unrepented faults of childhood? And when any have but for a time repented and afterwards gone back, not all at once, mostly, but slowly, one by one, have the practices of penitence, more watchful heed, rules of life, fences against sin, restraints on self, been laid aside by those unhappy beings whose 'last state is worse than the first.' Not at one blow, can men mostly cast off fear and love; not at once does He Whose 'delight it is to be with the sons of men,' Who 'would have all men to be saved,' in that He died for all, withdraw His lifegiving Presence from the soul.

Whereto then should this awful warning of our Lord, loving (we must well know) in its very awfulness, tend in us? Not assuredly to make us dread, lest

we have committed the unpardonable sin. Such a thought, we may boldly say, bold through the mercy of our God, is but a temptation of Satan. To fear lest we have committed it or have been near committing it, is a proof that we have not yet committed it. We see in the Gospels how they who are the types of it, went on unchecked from one wickedness to another; how the rebukes of the loving Saviour incensed them, His acts of love increased their hatred. There is no pause, no misgiving, no faltering in their sin. Mercy and love harden them the more, as though impenitence had been the very proper fruit of love. When our Lord performs an act of healing, '*straightway* they take counsel against Him to put Him to death;' they have not the compunctions of a heathen judge; nothing diverts, nothing moves, nothing startles them; they go on, as blind men, insensible of any hindrance; the suggestions of Nicodemus, the expostulation of the blind man healed, the witness of their own servants, 'never man spake as this man,' the testimony of John, the love of the multitude, the works of the Father, His wisdom, their own shame, all which could arrest their course, is cast aside. How could they be healed, whose disease grew through the very means of its healing, His works of power and His love? We have not sinned away all grace, if we have the grace left to fear. Nor again is the end of this warning to make us fear or think of others. 'Judge nothing before the time,' says the Apostle. Who knows whether any now seemingly impenitent, may not yet be touched by the melting grace of God, may not, at the touch, start

into life, and, much forgiven, love much, sorrow much, love more than we?

Rather, for us is this fearful picture of completed disease given, that we may shun the very slightest taint and touch of its infecting breath. It is a fearful thought, one already dead though alive; a dead soul within a living body; speaking, acting, thinking, in all the human powers of the mind, but dead by an unseen, unknown death; untouched by love, unreached by fear, unconscious of its own death; alive to things outward, to time and sense, to pleasure and vanity and ambition, but dead within, through the loss of God, its life; quickening, informing, directing the motions of the body, itself cold, lifeless, motionless to good—is this well-nigh the most appalling thought we can now picture, oh flee we then with the more anxious haste the slightest approach to an end so dreadful. 'Tender and delicate,' it has been said[t], 'is the Spirit of God.' Hearken we to His lowest whispers; obey we His Voice, 'for My Name is in Him;' dread we every approach of every sin, which may lead to final impenitence, and the quenching of the life and grace of God. 'Beware,' says a holy writer, 'lest any think things small, in how small things soever he be found knowingly to offend. Let no man say in his heart, "these are slight things; I care not to correct them; it is no great thing, if I continue in these so venial and so slight sins."' 'This,' adds St. Bernard[u], 'dearly beloved, is impenitence, this' (he means, when matured into its full ripeness

[t] Tert. de Spect. § 15. p. 205. Oxf. Tr.

[u] Serm. in Conv. St. Pauli, § 5.

of final obduracy,) 'is blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, blasphemy unpardonable.' Rather as in those who are sinking down the course of sin, or in some degree, perhaps, in ourselves formerly, sin gradually enlarged into greater sin, so let us trace the course backwards. Let us not be content with checking the overt sin, but trace out every root of it, to pluck it up. Since self-love produces emulation, and emulation envy at God's grace in another, and envy at God's grace, denial and disbelief in it, and this again hardness of heart and final impenitence, stop we not, until we have got back to its first root. Deadly it is to impugn known truth, let us shrink from knowing no evil, however painful, which we but suspect in ourselves; impenitence is deadly, never let us entertain for a moment the thought of any pleasurableness in any past sin, and if it arise, meet we it with thoughts of loathing, and of the misery of having offended God, arise we instantly on our falls, bear no delay, confess and seek our Saviour's healing Face; deadly is envy at a brother's grace, beware we, how we suspect graces not akin to any thing [x] in ourselves: how we dwell on seeming faults of the good, impute inferior motives, suspect that any are secretly such as ourselves; or

[x] 'From that blasphemy wherewith the Pharisees blasphemed, on whom that judgment was laid, it is plain that he also now blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, who ascribes to the adversary the operations and fruits of the Holy Ghost, which befals very many of us, when we often-times at hazard call the good and earnest, vainglorious, or belie, as wrathful, him who showeth forth a righteous zeal, and in other like ways, by evil surmises, give to good qualities false titles.' St. Basil Reg. brev. Tract. Inter. 273.

doubt the realities of graces, if found in bodies, or institutions, or people, more or less opposed to ourselves, or readily believe or repeat evil of them; or love not, discern not graces, when mingled with what is distasteful to us; or entertain rivalry; or be dissatisfied with our own measures of grace; or not wish that others 'our equals' should be higher in heaven than we, and that God's glory should not be in any way furthered, though we have the lower place; or not reverence the poor of Christ; and, as the bitter root of all, seek we to uproot self-love. Or further still, seek we, by God's grace, to overwhelm and bury the germs of evil by the opposed grace; seek we to love our brethren, not with a common love, but as loving Christ in them, love we and give Him thanks for His graces in them: be we heedful not to speak, I say not against known truth, but not even against such as we may not yet know, against nothing which bears any token of God's truth, which has any impress of it; love we it, be we glad to detect its features, although it comes to us in a form new to us, or through those alienated from us; love we it as a friend, because it is of God, even the Father, Who is 'the God of Truth,' and the Son, Who is 'the Truth,' and the Spirit, Who is 'the Spirit of Truth'; love we it, because[y] in it which is 'immortal' and unchanging and ever is the same, we love Him, from Whom it cometh, Him Who Alone IS, the abiding, unchanging, Ever-blessed Trinity; and while we love truth without us, love we it in us, and as to

[y] 'Whoso loveth not the truth, cannot but be opposed to the whole Trinity.' Alvarez T. ii. L. iii. de adept. Virt. P. 2. c. 7, § 8.

us; learn we to love slights and disparagement, that so others may have truer thoughts of us, think of us more as God knows us. In like way, labour we, through God's grace, to grow in all other graces which are opposed to each trace and shade of deadly sin; pray we ever for deeper awe, for truer penitence, for loving fear, for fearing love, so shall we in the increase of our inward life have the witness of His Spirit to us that we are not decaying unto death, so shall we after this brief weary struggle enter our everlasting Rest, behold the Ever-living Truth, and by His all-pervading love, love Himself in Himself, and all in Him.

Grant, we beseech Thee, merciful Lord, to Thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve Thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT[a].

St. Matt. xxv. 46.

'And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.'

Who is God? What am I? If you answer this question honestly to yourself, you have subdued every difficulty which men raise against the faith. Is God then our Maker, or do we make our god? Are we His creatures, the works of His hands, absolutely at His disposal, to whom He gives laws, which, at our great peril, we must obey? Or is our god, like the idols of old, which we have unlearnt in name, which we ridicule, 'the work of our hands, which,' not 'our fingers,' but our own minds 'have made,' the conception of our intellect, whose being and character *we* are to regulate, who is not to act otherwise than according to the laws which we assign to him, what commends itself to our—we will not use the old Theological terms, omniscience or omnipotence, they have associations inconveniently grand for us; nor must

[a] Notes to this Sermon will be found in 'What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment.' 1880. (Editor.)

we say our highly gift*ed*, highly endow*ed* nature, for this implies an Author Who endowed it—well, we will be modest and say, what approves itself to our moral nature? Does our God reveal Himself to us, and unfold to us His Greatness, His Majesty, His Holiness, His Justice? or do we discover Him, as we might some new planet, only that this magnificent world around us has its fixed laws without us, which we cannot contradict, but our God, since he is invisible, is to be formed ad libitum, the transcript of our own excellences, such as we could imagine them to be, if multiplied a thousand-fold? Is He then only just as we are just, holy as we, His Archetypes, are holy, good as we are good; yet so that none of these qualities in our God are to exceed the balance and proportion, which we can discover in our best-ordered natural selves? I say, 'our natural selves,' for when we come to grace, we know that millions have had other conceptions of God's awful holiness and justice, than it is proposed now to tolerate.

We are told, that human reason is prepared to capitulate as to all the old difficulties which it used to be so busy in parading, the doctrine of the All-Holy Trinity or the Incarnation[b]. It will own the past

[b] 'But if the wants and yearnings of the human heart, if a sense of perfect harmony with every moral perception (whether implanted or acquired,) are leading and will lead men to a belief in the Incarnation, the Trinity in Unity, or any other truth flowing out of these; there are other dogmas from which these same wants and yearnings, the same perceptions of the essential agreement between divine and human goodness, will altogether repel them. The strong arm of ecclesiastical authority, or the dictates of temporal interest, or a dread of public opinion,

generation to have been wrong in disputing about the Being of God, and will make a Concordat, allowing Almighty God to exist henceforth, as He wills. It will even admit the mystery of the Incarnation, and allow of that ineffable mystery of God become Man, that God did not disdain the Virgin's womb, God was born, was nourished at the breast, was carried to and fro, was obedient to His mother and His foster-father, hungered, was weary, thirsted, slept, was scourged, spat upon, mocked, nailed to the Cross, died[c]. For the concession of the Incarnation, if it means any thing, means all this; that He Who, as Man, bare all these sinless infirmities of our nature and all these sufferings, was Almighty God. The last and newest turn of our poor human reason is to accept all the main facts of the Gospel, even the Godhead and Manhood of our Divine Lord: only not their Divine meaning. People will even exalt the doctrine of the Incarnation, in order to overshadow the doctrine of the Cross, in which its humiliation found its deepest depth. Or they will admire, extol, the doctrine of the Cross, as '[d]the greatest moral act ever done in this world,' if only they may admire it as something purely imitable. What they shrink from is, to own its

may lead men to profess belief in them; but if the doctrine of endless punishment were suffered to rest on the grounds which have led some, who denied it before, to believe that Jesus Christ is God and man, no one can doubt that the great mass of Englishmen would thankfully and indignantly reject it.' National Review, vol. 16, p. 93.

[c] See St. Athanasius against the Ar. Tr. p. 443, note h, 444, n. i, 445, n. m.

[d] Jowett on the Atonement. St. Paul's Epp. ii. p. 481.

fullest adequate end, the light which it casts on the holiness of God and on His awful justice.

And yet we, who take these liberties with the attributes of God, who are we but the criminals? *We* criticise or limit the justice of God, whose name, in the language of Holy Scripture, is 'the unjust?' What criminal ere, by nature, owned the justice of the human law, which condemned him? If he admit that he was in the wrong, yet what punishment does not seem to him too severe? What means this never-ceasing din of murmurings, which in ever-varying accents, petulant, sullen, clamorous, sharp, defiant, blaspheming, rolls up discordantly to heaven against our God, accusing His Justice or Mercy in punishing at all or disproportionately? Every murmur from every human heart accuses knowingly or unknowingly the justice and love of God, punishing, as it thinks, unduly, relentlessly, for sin.

And now men systematize this. Reformation of the individual offender is proposed as the exclusive end of human punishment. Plainly it is not the object of Divine. And so men say, that human legislation '[e]has already risen to a higher idea than, according to the popular theology, is exhibited in the justice of an all-Merciful God.' Only it is not the popular theology only; they are equally the facts of nature. Punishment, but for the accepted grace of God, hardens, not softens, the offender. Punishments, which end in the excision of the offender, which cut

[e] National Review. Ib.

him off in his guilt, have plainly nothing remedial, that we know of. And yet what is this whole wide world full of, to the sight of the simple unspoilt soul? What is it but one multiplying mirror of the words, 'Man is full of misery'? What is this Nemesis, of which, since faith has been chilled, men's writings are so full? What is it, but a heathen confession of an unerring Hand, which guides the sin back upon the sinner's head? The book of God's works, to which men are so fond of appealing now, is a book like the Prophet's, '[f] written within and without, and there was written therein lamentations and mourning and woe.' Earth is as full of punishment as of guilt, filled to overflowing with guilt and misery. And, in all this, man's conscience sees but punishment; faith only can discern that it is but chastisement, if, by the grace of God, man wills. Man's conscience, until he deadens it, and most, when the uncompromising reality of thoughts of death silences all voices of self-deceit, speaks out clearly, that punishment is '[g] the due reward of our deeds.' The belief in Tartarus, and the unending woe there, was not, as one [h], with a double paradox, maintained, the result of the teaching of the lawgivers. It was antecedent to lawgivers, whether it was the traditional memory of the words, '[i] thou shalt surely die,' or the voice of man's natural conscience, which, we know from the deepest

[f] Ezek. ii. 10. [g] St. Luke xxiii. 41.

[h] Warburton, Divine Legation, maintaining that future punishment was taught by human lawgivers, and was not believed by Israel.

[i] Gen. ii. 17.

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of their philosophers[k], was quickened in the near sight of death, and was tormented, lest the belief in judgment to be undergone there, which a man had heretofore ridiculed as fables, should indeed be true. The word 'ill-deserving,' Butler reminds us[l], is the verdict of human nature against us. The superstitious erring belief of heathenism, the awe at death, the gnawing worm of conscience, the oppressiveness of guilt, the fruitlessness of efforts to bribe or beguile or assuage its relentless voice, are so many million echoes of God's judgments which fall around, and speak a heaven-implanted conviction in man's soul; 'Punishment awaits sin.'

But of what duration? All knowledge as to eternity must come from the Eternal, Whose it is. We, of ourselves, with no experience but of time, know, of course, nothing of it, it's being, it's conditions, except what Almighty God reveals to us. Our nearest idea of it is, '[m] boundless life, all existing at once,'

[k] Plato de Rep. i. 5. 'Know well, he said, O Socrates, that, when any one is, or thinks he is, near dying, there entereth into him fear and anxiety as to things, in regard to which they never before came into his mind. For those myths too, which are told about those in Hades, that he who has been guilty of injustice here must pay the penalty to justice there, which had been laughed at thus far, then torture his soul lest they should be true; and he himself, either through the weakness of old age or *as being now nearer to the things there*, perceives them somewhat more clearly. He becomes then full of imaginings and fear, and considers with himself and looks whether he has injured any one. He then, who discovers many wrongs which he has done in life, ofttimes starting out of his sleep too, like children, is in a state of terror and lives amid evil anticipations.'

[l] Anal. P. i. c. 6.

[m] St. Anselm Monol. c. 24.

'an everlasting now' of bliss or misery[n]. But then reason ought not to raise *à priori* objections, on the ground of *that*, of whose laws, rules, and mode of being, we know nothing. It is a common formula of those who venture to object any thing to God's revelation; 'it is inconceivable that God should visit passing acts of sin with an eternity of misery.' True, that all Scripture says, that our state hereafter will be determined by what we have been and have done here. On this fleeting being hangs our eternity. '[o] We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether good or bad.' But who revealed to us, that sin ceases in the evil, when life ceases? Who told us that it is *passing* sin, which God so visits? The pleasures of sin are passing enough, yea, if men could prolong them to the years of man's life before the flood. Sinners themselves pall at them, and seek for fresh condiments of their sins. But sin itself ceases not, even with satiety of sin. Men sin, in renewing the memory of their fresher sins, which had more zest and life in them. They sin, when they can no more sin themselves, in taking pleasure in those who do them, as St. Paul says[p]. They sin in memory, imagination, diseased pleasure in histories of sin, real or fictitious. Or they exchange the sin for some other, adapted to their years. But never do men abandon sin, except

[n] 'An everlasting now of misery.' Southey, Thalaba.
[o] 2 Cor. v. 10.
[p] Rom. i. 32.

by willingly receiving God's converting grace. To sin on is nature. Of itself, and unless interfered with by the overwhelming grace of God, sin continues, encrusted, indurated, congealed, like the eternal ice; its surface thawed for a moment under the heat of God's love shining on it from above, but the cold mass itself, unpenetrated, unchanged. It grows, deepens, hardens, becomes more malignant, more ingrained, more a part of man's self until the hour of death. Why, unless changed even then by the grace of God, should it change in eternity?

Look at the Christian's sin. What more could God do for us, that He has not done for us? God became Man for love of us. God gave His own Co-equal Son for love of us. God the Son, made Man, died for us, suffered the Father's displeasure at our sins, the Innocent for the guilty; He made us members of Himself; joined us as closely to Him as He could; gave us His Spirit to rule our wills; antedated reason by His grace; pleaded with us in our consciences; shone on us with His glowing love, whenever we did, by His grace, any thing to please Him; forgave us, whenever we asked Him, as soon as we asked Him; promised to forgive us whenever we should ask Him; pledged His word to us that in His service we should have peace and rest, the blessings of this life and of the life to come; surrounded us with such a prodigality of His bountifulness, to make our salvation easy to us; helped us whenever we asked Him or without our asking Him; forecame us, surrounded us, immersed us in the ever-present Ocean of His Grace. What could

He have done more for us which He has not done? what has the profusion of His love kept back or kept in store, that it should win our free-will there, if His love have not won us here?

But, apart even from this, unchangeableness may be, for what we know, one of the laws of eternity. We know that it shall be of the blessed. Heaven could not be Heaven, unless they were fixed in good. Oh, what a piercing pang of agony were it, what a death-throe of misery, if the thought of the possibility of failure could overshadow with the thinnest vapoury cloud the Beatific Vision of their God! What? See God, face to face, love Him with that transforming ever-inflowing love, be ever with Jesus, thank Him, feel through and through, 'What Jesus 'tis to love,' and think it possible that one could again be ungrateful to His love, again sin against Him, again crucify Him? No, the impossibility of sinning must underlie all the bliss of Heaven. The ever-present eternal Love of God must bring with it a consciousness, that it is eternal. For this cause saints have longed to die, that they might never again, in the faintest thought of their minds, displease God.

But it may be an equal law of our moral nature, that they who reject God in time, even to the end, will, by a continuance of that same fixed will, reject Him everlastingly.

Six thousand years have not changed (except in perfecting his inventiveness of evil) that dreadful spirit, which beheld God face to face, and would not be of the second Order of beatified Intelligences, but

chose to be first in Hell. We see before us, in that other spiritual world, for which God made us and to which we are hastening, a being, gifted with most intense intelligence, once '[q] full of wisdom and perfect in beauty,' now fixed in intensest hatred of our race; yet one to whom men, in their evil, gain such a terrible likeness, that we speak of certain malice as 'Satanic,' of some extreme wickedness as 'devilish.' He was created in grace. Enabled by God, he beheld God. He saw in God what, gifted by God, his wondrous intelligence could see of that which it will be the bliss of eternity to behold, the Infinite Wisdom, Greatness, Goodness, Love, Blissfulness of God. He saw it; and, it is thought, because there were others higher than he, he rejected it. Any how, we know the fact, that, having rejected it, he now unchangeably hates it. And now, with the memory of What God Is, with that undying sight before him, with the knowledge too of his own intolerable misery, he has, for these six thousand years, envied to man the bliss which he himself refused, and has, with a malice of which again we see a likeness in extreme human wickedness, sought to involve us in his own guilt and misery. Look at the picture of him, throughout the revelation of God to us. I begin with our Lord's own words. '[r] A murderer from the beginning,' who 'abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it.' Of him our Lord speaks as the great opponent of His kingdom, as desiring to shake through

[q] Ezek. xxviii. 12. [r] St. John viii. 44.

and through the faithfulness of His Apostles[s], but as himself falling from heaven[t]. Of him our Lord's Apostles bid us beware, as our especial adversary, longing to destroy us[u], devising evil, crafty, tempting, deceiving, and then accusing '[x] before God day and night'; entering into the wicked[y], and filling the heart with evil[z]. His being is one continual sin. St. John saith, he '[a] *sinneth*, from the beginning.' Into his power the evil world falls; he is its prince[b], its god[c]. The evil, our Lord says, come into a relation of terrific nearness to him! They have him for their father, instead of God. '[d] Ye are of your father the devil; and the lusts of your father ye will do.' Six thousand years, nay, the whole course of this world, does not exhaust his malice; the shorter the time, the greater his wrath, because, the time ended, there will be no added souls for him to destroy. Holy Scripture says again, '[e] Having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.' And, in the end, he will be allowed to put forth '[f] all power and signs and lying wonders, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness'; to stamp his own likeness[g] on all who will receive it, that, having borne his image here, they may be cast with him into the lake of fire.

We are bribed in our own case to disbelieve or to

[s] St. Luke xxii. 31.
[t] Ib. x. 18.
[u] 1 St. Peter v. 8.
[x] Rev. xii. 10.
[y] St. John xiii. 27.
[z] St. Luke xxii. 3, Acts v. 3.
[a] 1 St. John iii. 8.
[b] St. John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11.
[c] 2 Cor. iv. 4.
[d] St. John viii. 44.
[e] Rev. xii. 12.
[f] 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.
[g] Rev. xiii. 16, 17, xiv. 9, 11, xv. 2, xvi. 2, xix. 20.

shrink from owning the possibility of that terrible fixedness in misery and evil. So God has exhibited it to us in our dreadful enemy. Malice more horrible we cannot imagine, than that of one, with that wonderful wide-embracing intelligence, himself, in eternity, beholding its unendurable hopelessness of misery, yet employing all his marvellous skill in evil and his knowledge of man, in one unceasing toil to make the race of man like to himself, in suffering.

We have no reason, then, from experience, but the contrary, to think that the mere fact of passing out of this life, will change the bad into good. We see, even in this life, that mere suffering does not. It is a terribly vivid description, which has continually been verified; 'h they gnawed their tongues for pain and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.' We see, in Satan, that no knowledge, no experience of the consequences of sin, no sight of God, no presence of eternity, converts the soul to God. We know in our own selves, that more love could not be shown us, than God has shown us. What, as being yet in our probation, as being still capable of change, as not being fixed in evil, as being the objects of the love not of the wrath of God, we cannot, (thanks be to God!) yet know, God has supplied to us in the knowledge of the Archfiend. What does there yet remain, which God *could* do, and which we do not see to be fruitless, unless we yield ourselves to His grace and love here, that we may be His, He our's, for ever?

h Rev. xvi. 10, 11.

Place alone does not make Heaven or Hell. Hell, with the love of God, were as Heaven; without the love of God, it may be, it seems even probable, that Heaven would be the worse Hell. Hell may be the less misery to the damned. For to be in Heaven and yet to be as a devil, to see the mutual bliss of creatures such as we once were, yet from our own hateful passions to be incapable of it, to see their joy in God and God's beatific unfolding of His Essence to their transported gaze, and ourselves, being such as we had unmade ourselves, incapable of any love or joy—the contrast of such bliss and such misery, such love and such hate, seems the worse Hell. Think you, it were impossible to see God and to hate Him? God forbid, that we should be able to conceive it! Yet we see it in Satan. There is no middle line in the end between loving God and hating Him. 'Haters of God[i]' is one of habitual characters of human nature, left to itself. When God took flesh and dwelt among us '[k] full of grace and truth,' this was the witness which the Truth bore of us; '[l] The world hateth Me, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil;' '[m] He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also. Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father.' But hatred of God were in itself Hell. We were created for love, the love of our God, and of each other in God. To exist without love, without loving, without being loved, would in itself be unendurable misery. It were an unnatural

[i] Rom. i. 30, Ps. lxxxi. 15, lxxxiii. 2, cxxxix. 21.
[k] St. John i. 14. [l] Ib. vii. 7. [m] Ib. xv. 23, 24.

existence, which must be restless and miserable because unnatural and missing that for which it was created. Not to love, is to hate. 'We ourselves,' says St. Paul[n] of unregenerate nature, 'were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.' Apart from the central misery, the endless loss of the end of our being, of Him Who is still our God; apart from all those terrific physical miseries, of which our Lord speaks, the inextinguishable fire, the never-dying worm of each,—the society of the damned were misery unutterable. Conceive this alone, to which St. Paul says human nature of itself went, hatred of God, intrinsic hatefulness, hatred of one another. Gather in one in your mind an assembly of all those men or women, from whom, whether in history or in fiction, your memory most shrinks (no fiction can reach the reality of human sin); gather in mind all which is most loathsome, most revolting, the most treacherous, malicious, coarse, brutal, inventive, fiendish cruelty, unsoftened by any remains of human feeling; such as thou couldst not endure for a single hour;' conceive the fierce fiery eyes of hate, spite, phrenzied rage, ever fixed on thee, glaring on thee, looking thee through and through with hate; sleepless in their horrible gaze; felt, if not seen; never turning from thee, never to be turned from, except to quail under the like piercing sight of hate; hear those yells of

[n] Tit. iii. 3.

blaspheming concentrated hate, as they echo along the lurid vault of hell; every one hating every one, and venting that hate unceasingly with every inconceivable expression of malignity; conceive all this, multiplied, intensified, reflected all around, on every side; and, amidst it, the especial hatred of any one, whose sins thou sharedst, whom thou didst thoughtlessly encourage in sin, or teach some sin before unknown —a deathlessness of hate were in itself everlasting misery. Yet a fixedness in that state, in which the hardened, malignant, sinner dies, involves, without any further retribution of God, this endless misery.

Thus far, then, the objection against God's justice in annexing eternal misery to the rejection of Himself in this short life, must take a new form. As we see in Satan, the sinner, even apart from God's judgments on sin, carries about within him his own Hell. So then men must question, not God's justice, in that sin, persevered in to the end of this life, must involve misery, co-extensive with the being of the sinner; rather, if he question at all, he will have to question the wisdom and love of God, in that He created beings, capable of that awful choice, whether they would of their own free-will accept or reject Himself, and that for ever. And so we come back to the primal insoluble mystery, the origin of evil, which yet, unless we would be Atheists, we must admit to be compatible with the Existence of an All-good, All-loving, All-wise, Almighty God.

We may, with reverence, rejoice in that awful gift of our liberty and free-agency; we may rejoice in it,

because it is the gift of God. But it is the key of heaven and hell. Sanctified by the grace of God, we have that jubilant joy, above all joys, freely to love Him Who loved us and created us for His love, and gave us ourselves, that, by the might of His grace, we might, with the whole power of our natural and supernatural being, love Him. But the gift of immortal life, and the power of immortal love, involves also the power of rejecting the infinite love and the choice of the deathless death. God says, '[o] why *will* ye die? I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. Wherefore turn and live ye.' But it may be, and seems to be, a contradiction, that an intelligent creature should not be endowed with a power of choice, (our word 'intelligent' primarily involves choice,) or that any being should have a really free inherent power to choose, and not be able to choose amiss and to abide perserveringly in that choice; or that that choice should not extend to That which is, above all, the Object of choice, the Supreme Good, God. Thoughtful men have held it to be a contradiction, that any created being should have the free power, freely to choose God, without the fearful corresponding power of refusing Him. Certainly, it seems so. Grace, which should not only bear us on with a mighty tide over every obstacle to choose our God, but which should be absolutely, physically, irresistible, would, of course, destroy free-will. With whatever preponderance of grace God might create any being, yet, if free-will is left at all, it must be

[o] Ezek. xviii. 31, 32.

free to reject God, and, if free to reject Him, then free also to reject Him perseveringly. And so, although both angels and man were created in a state of grace, and were empowered, yea, were impelled by that grace, freely themselves to choose God, it would be a contradiction that there should be those created, whose bliss should be the perpetual inflow of the love of God and the vision of Himself, without there being those who, being created and endowed for the everlasting love of and communion with God, did, by a misuse of their free-will, shut themselves out eternally from it. This would in itself involve the eternal existence of the self-hating, each-other-hating, God-hating, hideous and miserable society of Hell.

Wherein the misery of Hell should consist, we can, of course, know from God only.

[p] 'Christ on Himself, considerate Master, took
The utterance of that doctrine's fearful sound.
The Fount of Love His servants sends to tell
Love's deeds; Himself reveals the sinner's Hell.'

He Himself has warned us, while we can escape them and that we may escape them, what those sufferings

[p] 'When first God stirred me, and the Church's word
Came as a theme of reverent search and fear,
It little cost to own the lustre clear
O'er rule she taught, and rite, and doctrine poured;
For conscience craved, and reason did accord.
Yet one there was that wore a mien austere,
And I did doubt, and, troubled, asked to hear
Whose mouth had force to edge so sharp a sword.
My mother oped her trust, the Holy Book,
And healed my pang. She pointed, and I found
Christ,' &c. Lyra Apostolica No. 82 (Dr. Newman's), p. 97.

are, and that they are eternal. O they seem to fall so heavily from His Human Soul! It must have been the deepest grief of that God-united Soul, above every thing passing, above His own unutterable Sufferings, above that temporary forsaking by the Father, and the bearing of our sins and His Father's wrath on sin, that there would be those, who *would* not be redeemed, who still *would* not love God Who so loved them as to give His own Son for them, and so, who must eternally hate Him, and the wrath of God abide on them [q]. How heavily they sound! They are not words of rebuke, but of solemn warning as to an evil choice. Part, He says, with any thing which causes thee to offend God, although it should be dear to thee, as right eye or hand or foot [r], and the parting as painful, as, thyself, to pluck them out or cut them off. 'It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm (their own individual worm) dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'

Or, after that description of the merciful and the unmerciful, of those who fed, housed, clothed, visited, Christ in the poor, and of those who, in their selfish neglect of the poor, despised Christ, '[s] these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life everlasting.' 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'

How mournfully tender are the words over the traitor, if they might yet scare him from his treason! 'Good were it for that man, if he had never been

[q] St. John iii. 36. [r] St. Mark ix. 43–48. [s] St. Matt. xxv. 46, 41.

born!' Yet good were it for us to have been born, if, after countless ages of any suffering[t], we were, at the end of them, to be restored and to behold God! God has made our salvation to cost *Him* so dear a price, and *us* so little, that men do not let themselves think, what is to them the value of salvation. All but eternity passes away; what has passed away is as if it had never been. Countless myriads of years of suffering would come to an end, and if, when they had come to an end, the soul were then admitted to the beatific vision of God and the bliss in His Infinite love, all the past myriads of years of suffering would be but a speck, and would absolutely disappear, in that eternity of love. Good, eternally good would it be for that soul to have been born; for it would, through whatever period of suffering in time, have attained to the one only End of the creature, eternal bliss in the Bliss of God.

'[u] What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world,' our Lord again appeals to us, 'and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' Yet, if souls in the end were restored, they would not be lost. A person might lose a passing period of bliss, but even this would only be a loss which would then be utterly effaced. He might lose, (and even many of those who are saved do lose for ever,) a portion of the capacity of containing God

[t] 'A hope that after the day of Judgment God's Mercy may, in the lapse of infinite ages, find some mode of restoring the lost, consistently with the maintenance of His purity and justice.' Bp. Tait, The word of God and the ground of faith, Part II, Pref., p. vi.

[u] St. Matt. xvi. 26.

and His infinite love. A stunted soul, although full according to its measure, has still not the same capacity of knowing or loving God, or containing the ever-filling Ocean of His love. So far he is subject to great irreparable loss. But so great is the least portion of the love of God, so great the bliss of loving Him and being loved by Him, even if one were the narrowest soul which God had created, that, being such, one would have gained an eternity of bliss, such as the Precious Blood of Christ and His infinite Merits could alone obtain for one. To 'save his soul' and to 'lose it,' are plainly contradictories. Such an one would have saved his soul. It must then mean something else, something irreparable, to 'lose' it.

So too when our Lord bids us, '[x]Fear not them which can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell,' death is opposed to death, destruction to destruction, a destruction, which is but partial, of this body in this fleeting life, to a destruction which is complete, of body and soul in Hell. Temporary suffering is *not* destruction. Not until the last torturing pang had crushed out the last quivering remains of life, had men killed the martyr's marred and shapeless body. What then can destruction of soul and body mean but that deathless death, from which all life is gone?

The Apostles, speaking by the Holy Ghost, do but say, in other words, the self-same truth. When they say, that '[y]they who obey not the Gospel of our Lord

[x] St. Matt. x. 28. [y] 2 Thess. i. 7–9.

Jesus Christ, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord, when He shall be revealed in flaming fire,' what do they but echo those same words of our Lord, 'everlasting punishment,' 'destroy body and soul in Hell' 'depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire'? Or the beloved Apostle, when he had to describe how those not written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire[z]; 'and each shall be tormented in fire and brimstone, and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever[a].'

You see then, even from these few places, how little the doctrine of everlasting punishment depends upon the meaning of the single word, *αἰώνιος*. Not that there is any doubt as to that word. It is a flimsy plea for an unbelief, not resting on such pleas but on men's *à priori* conceptions of their God, when some have said, that the Hebrew word which is used for eternity is used also for a term less than eternity.

Strange argument this, in the mouth of those who deny that the Hebrews knew of the immortality of the soul. As if it were any proof that our Lord did not mean to reveal immortality of suffering to those who did believe in the immortality of the soul, when He used the word which to them expressed everlasting, and only everlasting, because *a* word was used by the Hebrews[b], of eternity and also of time less than eternity. Yet even of the Hebrew word this at least is certain, that it is not used prospectively of any thing

[z] Rev. xx. 15.

[a] Ib. xiv. 10, 11. *εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων.*

[b] עולם.

less than an unbroken continuity, co-extensive with the existence of that of which it is spoken. '[c]An everlasting covenant' or '[d]a statute for ever' is a covenant or statute co-existent with the being of the people, as God's people; a '[e]servant for ever' is a servant during his whole natural life. So then, when used of the Being of God, it expresses God's Eternity[f]; when used of the kingdom of God[g] or of Christ[h], it denotes a kingdom which shall have no end; when used of man's being after the resurrection, the 'everlasting life[i]' or 'everlasting contempt[i],' to which, it is declared, men shall severally rise, describe their mode of being, unending as themselves.

But, beyond even this, our Lord, when He declared the everlasting woe of those who should reject God unto the end, was speaking to those who already believed never-ending punishment; and the word[k], in which He willed that it should be handed down to all who should believe in Him, had, to a Greek, no other meaning. It would be a forced meaning in itself, it would have been a forced meaning to those to whom our Lord used it, if He had used it in any undefined sense. 'Interpret the Scripture,' men say[l], 'like any book.' Of what then could Plato or any Greek-speaking Heathen or Christian understand it, save of that which is truly everlasting? Of what

[c] Gen. xvii. 7, 13, &c. [d] Lev. xvi. 29, &c., Ex. xii. 14, 17.
[e] Deut. xv. 17, 1 Sam. xxviii. 12.
[f] Gen. xxi. 33, Ps. xc. 2, xciii. 2, Is. xl. 28.
[g] Ps. ix. 8, x. 16, xxix. 10. [h] Ps. xlv. 7. [i] Dan. xii. 2.
[k] *αἰώνιος* [l] Ess. and Rev. (Prof. Jowett) p. 377.

could the poor understand it, to whom the Gospel was preached, whose special property it was and is? If endless duration of suffering, which Jews and Heathen believed when Jesus came, had been an error, what would these words be but an emphatic confirmation of the error? It is not a mere question of language. The moral aspect of the use of the word lies far deeper than any question as to its abstract meaning. It is this which edges the force of the familiar argument, that you must not take in twofold and ambiguous senses the self-same word, under which our Lord in the same sentence spoke of the unending life and the unending death. The unmerciful shall go away into *everlasting* punishment[m], but the righteous into life *everlasting*[n]. If there is any one thing in the Gospel, which one should expect to be declared in clear and unmistakeable language, it would be the issue of this our state of trial here, *that* in which all should end, the result in which the acceptance or rejection of God's clearly-revealed will should issue, of weal or woe. Any how our Lord declares it repeatedly. If He used ambiguous words in this—I dare not, for reverence, finish the question. But—in what could you trust any one, who should use ambiguous language on such a subject as this? In what matter of this world would you trust one who, in any matter of this world, should use the self-same word in two distinct senses in the self-same sentence without giving any hint that he was so doing? In none. Find any case, in which you

[m] κόλασιν αἰώνιον. [n] ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

would trust a man, who did so in the things of men, and then ascribe it to your God in the things of God. I could not trust man. I could not believe it of my God. No! Whether any of you will hear or whether you will forbear, whether you will say, that it will drive others or yourselves into unbelief, *I* must be faithful to my God. Could I think that in one thing Jesus, the Truth, had used one ambiguous word, had used one word, calculated to convey what is not true, whether (God forgive the blasphemy!) as knowing or not knowing that He did so, my whole faith would be gone. For the word of Jesus would no longer be certain truth. What would remain, but an anticipated natural Hell, a sense of guilt, a sense of deserved punishment, and no Atoner, no Redeemer; none to pardon, none to heal?

And who are the witnesses that our Lord meant what He said? Not, a single speculator, (however original his genius,) but the poor, rich in faith, who received simply what was simply said. The Gospel is the Gospel of the poor. It was preached, 'not in words of man's wisdom,' but by 'unlearned and ignorant men,' by the tentmaker and the fishermen, with the power and wisdom of the Holy Ghost, to men like themselves. They, as our Lord appointed them, taught the world, and the world received His sayings. This, before Origen, was the belief of the world; this, it is said soon after St. John left this earth, '[o] many nations of barbarians' too 'believed,

[o] St. Iren. adv. Haeres. iii. 4. St. Irenæus, in paraphrasing the Apostles' Creed, distinctly mentions eternal punishment as part of the

having salvation without paper and ink written by the Spirit in their hearts,' 'in speech, to the Greek, barbarians, but in doctrine and practice and conversation most wise for their faith's sake, well-pleasing to God, walking in all righteousness and purity and wisdom.' 'Securus judicat orbis terrarum.' The converted world ever believed that wrath to come from which they had fled. The unbelieving historian[p] even assigns this as a ground of its rapid conversion,

universal belief, derived from the Apostles. The whole passage is, 'There being so great evidence, we ought not to seek further among others after the truth which we may obtain readily from the Church, since into it, as into a wealthy depository, the Apostles brought together most fully all which belongs to the truth; so that every one, whosoever will, may take from her the water of life. For this is the entrance into life; all the rest are thieves and robbers. Wherefore these we ought to avoid, but choose the things of the Church with the utmost diligence, and lay hold of the tradition of the truth. For what? Were it any small matter, which was questioned, ought we not to have recourse to the oldest Churches where the Apostles lived, and from these to derive, as to the present question, what is certain and clear? For if the Apostles had not even left us any Scriptures, ought we not to follow the rule of the tradition, which they delivered to those to whom they committed the Churches?

'To which appointment many nations assent of those barbarians who believe in Christ, having the salvation without paper and ink written in their hearts, and, keeping diligently the old tradition, believe in One God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and of things which are therein, through Jesus Christ the Son of God, Who, for His exceeding love for His creature, endured that birth of the Virgin, Himself through Himself uniting man to God, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, rising again, and received in glory, and to come in glory, the Saviour of all who are saved, and the Judge of those who are judged, and casting into eternal fire those who pervert the truth and despise His Father and His Coming. This faith, they who have without letters believed, are, as to our speech, barbarians, but in doctrine' &c. (as in the text).

[p] Gibbon, Decl. and Fall. c. 16.

that they dreaded that wrath, forgetting that it is not in man's power to inwork into men the constraining active conviction of the awful justice of God. But the martyrs, in the simplicity of their faith, when they allowed themselves to be torn and mangled and burnt, their flesh shredded by the iron hooks or scorched by the red-hot iron chair, sooner than incur, as they said, eternal death by denying Christ, were better witnesses [q] to the truth which they believed, than the erratic speculative mind, which imagined an eternity, varying from weal to woe, and from woe to weal, consistent only in this, that it denied alike an eternity of ill and an eternity of unchanging bliss [r].

O poor, hapless, unintelligent acuteness of the natural man, how is it that thou seest not, that thou palmest deceits upon thyself, and by thy evasions of

[q] The evidence to the belief in eternal punishment from the simple sayings of the Martyrs, as given in Ruinart, was to me the more striking, as shewing the undoubting faith of the people.

[r] Origen de princip. L. iii. in St. Jerome, Ep. 124, ad Avit. § 11, Vall. Origen taught also the transmigration of souls into animals, Ib. In popular works he taught the eternity of punishment. Tract. 34. in St. Matt. n. 72, p. 889, in Jerem. Hom. 18, n. 1, p. 241. In the c. Cels. vi. 26, he furnishes the ground of this. 'All which might be said on this topic, it is not suitable to explain now or to all. Nay, neither is it without peril to entrust to writing the plain truth as to such things. For the many need no further teaching than that of the punishment of sinners. For it is not expedient to go further, on account of those who scarcely, through the fear of eternal punishment (*αἰωνίου κολάσεως*, our Lord's words, which he takes literally), restrain the outpouring into any amount of wickedness, and the sins thence resulting.' The statement as to those 'scarcely restrained by fear of eternal punishment,' and the necessity of not speaking out, imply, of course, that the eternal punishment was the belief of Christians, which he was afraid to disturb. This doubtless was the ground why his error was not condemned in early times. It had not spread, nor did he seek to gain adherents.

the truth condemnest thyself, that thou seekest, not the truth, but to escape the truth? How is it, that thou seest it not, when, so soon as thou canst imagine that the fire or the destruction may be everlasting, but the sinner not abide everlastingly in that fire or not feel that destruction, thou doubtest not, that the fire and the destruction do last for ever; that 'everlasting' does mean 'lasting for ever'? Or when again thou canst persuade thyself that it does not mean this, but some lengthened period of time, thou then doubtest not, that 'destruction' is *not* 'annihilation,' or that 'punishment' does *not* mean mere loss or forfeiture of somewhat, but a real suffering—how is it, that thou dost not see, that, each time, thou liest to thyself, admitting to thyself each time the natural meaning of God's words, so that thou be not compelled thereby to own the whole truth of God?

What is this, of which I have been speaking, brethren? Is it a question of the Schools, a matter of opinion, about which one may harmlessly bandy arguments to and fro, an abstract speculation, on which it is of little moment whether we take the wrong side? Is it a question as to the attributes of Almighty God, which it depends upon us to decide? One should think so from the fearless way in which some peremptorily deny everlasting woe, on the ground of their *à priori* conception of Almighty God. When men so speak, they forget that they themselves are sinners. In fulness of life, men can '[s] put far' from them 'the evil day,' think lightly of sin, try

[s] Am. vi. 3.

to bribe by adulation God Most High and Most Just. 'He is so loving, He will not punish!' Far different is it, in youth or age, when death comes very near; far wiser was that old Theology, in which men meditated daily on the four last things, Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell. No question of philosophy is it, but of the death which God has pronounced on sin; the death which we sinners have deserved; the endless shutting out from the Presence of God and from His holiness, which our sins entailed upon us: the death from which Jesus died to redeem us; and now, for ever, pleads, during this our day, for each one of us, the Merits of that Precious Death at the Right Hand of God.

It is not the question of one article of the faith only; for the faith is one, and lives or dies, as one. Never will any one, in truth, believe the Redemption by Christ, who does not believe in Hell. God became man, to redeem,—from what? from what, according to them, is equally remedied without it. He died, —to purchase what? What, after a time, is to be bestowed alike on Judas and the beloved disciple, on Nero and St. Peter, on Messalina and the Blessed Virgin, on Satan and Michael the Archangel[t].

[t] 'If all rational creatures are alike, and if, out of virtues or vices, they at their own free-will are either raised on high or sunk in the deep, and after a long revolution and infinite ages, there shall be a restoration of all things, and the glory of all who have been on probation, be one, how will the virgin be removed from the prostitute? what difference will there be between the Mother of the Lord and (which to name is shame) the victims of the common lusts? Shall Gabriel then and the devil be all one? Apostles and dæmons, one? Prophets and false prophets, one? Martyrs and persecutors, one? Invent what thou willest,

Never will you know any thing of the depth of sin, or the deeper depth of the love of Christ or of God, until you not only believe in the abstract, but accustom yourselves to think of that awful doom, to which each wilful rejection of God's voice in your conscience, and of God in that voice, was dragging you. Fear not to look at it. For, narrow though the bridge be which spans its lurid flames, that bridge is sure to those whom it upholds; for it is the Cross of Christ, and Christ Himself will stretch forth His Hand to lead thee safely over it. '[u]He is our Guide, leading us gently over death.' Fear not to look at it, but fear, not to look at it. It is almost a sacred proverb, that none are so likely to fall into Hell, as they who think themselves most secure of not falling into it. While you meditate on it, you will conceive a horror of your sins, which, step by step, were dragging you captive thither; you will fear to live separate from God here, as you would not live separate and alien from His love for ever; you will love *His* mercy, Who, being God, became Man and died in your stead, that you might not die eternally; you will love Him, Who was born, suffered, died, to gain our individual love, and while we, by each sin, thrust rudely His love from us, interceded unceasingly with God, that we might yet love Him and be loved by

redouble years and times, and throng with torments infinite ages, if the end of all is alike, all the past is as nothing, for the whole question is, not, what we have once been, but what we shall be for ever.' St. Jerome in Jonam iii. 6, 7, p. 19, Vallars, quoted by Huet Origenian ii. 21, comp. Ep. 84, Pammach. et Ocean. § 7, p. 524. Vall. quoted ib.

[u] Ps. xlviii. 14.

Him for ever. While we were preparing our own place in the 'everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,' He was preparing for us our own individual place in the everlasting bliss around the Throne of God.

My son, if thou hadst a second soul to save, when thou shouldest lose thine own; if God had clearly revealed to thee, that there was a second state of probation for thee, when thou hadst rejected God perseveringly to the end in this; if He had revealed to thee as clearly that the wages of sin were *not* everlasting death, as He has, that they are,—then too sin would be base miserable ingratitude for His infinite love for each of us sinners. Would that one need say no more! Would that you, each and all, so loved God, as He deserves to be loved by you, as He, in His eternal love for you, made you to love Him, as, whatever you are, He now too, at this hour, loves you. But the love of God is known only by those who love. The fear of God displeased drives men to God appeased. We dare not be wiser than God, Who said by His Apostle, '[x] knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men.' We dare not be wiser than God, Who said, '[y] I will forewarn you, whom ye shall fear; fear Him, Which, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell. Yea, I say unto you, Fear Him.' Listen not to them, who repeat to you the Tempter's words, '[z] Thou shalt not surely die.' Listen not to those, who would make Jesus a deceiver; but listen to Him, Who was crucified for

[x] 2 Cor. v. 11. [y] St. Luke xii. 5. [z] Gen. iii. 4.

you, listen to Him, Who loves you; so shall you for ever thank Him and bless Him, that the fear of Hell scared you back from sin, and made you take refuge in Him, Who loves you more tenderly than a mother doth, in the bosom of your God and His everlasting love.

SERMON XV[a].

THE LOSSES OF THE SAVED.

1 Cor. iii. 11–15.

'Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath builded thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.'

You all, I doubt not, hope in some way by the mercy of our God, to be saved at last. The mercy of God is so all but-exhaustless; He has such a marvellous variety of contrivances in the rich resources of His grace and His Providence, to win His rebels to Himself; and the thought of being shut out for ever from His love in the hateful and hating society of Hell, is so horrible, no wonder that you do not imagine of yourselves what is beyond all horror, horrible. God grant that your hopes may, all, be true! And yet, or rather because I long that they may prove true, I must say to

[a] Preached at Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, Lent, 1866.

you faithfully; entire fearlessness of falling into Hell is no good sign. As far as it springs in any from that loving faith in God, which cannot imagine parting from Him Who loved it, or from a meditative contemplation of the Infinite love of the Redemption, or of His past mercies to ourselves, that He Who loved His own will love them to the end, such hopes, if the soul, by God's grace, keep itself from preferring God's creatures to Himself and rejecting God for them, such hopes, if they draw the soul to God, are doubtless inspired by God. But hopes amid carelessness or worldliness, or amid occasional deadly, only half-repented sin, they are not helps, they are hindrances to salvation, because they are hindrances to earnestness, and to that reverend awe, amid which by God's grace we are, the Apostle bids us, to work out our own salvation.

But be it, as we wish and long for; be it, that these uncertain and delusive hopes will not, by the mercy of God, wreck the salvation of any one; that all of us (God grant it!) not through but in despite of those hopes, shall be saved; that God will one day shiver the soul's false brittle hopes and give it true repentance, firm faith, penitent love, well-grounded hope, what then? In one sense, all will be right; for the lowest place in heaven were as much above the desert of us sinners, as heaven, yea, as infinite space is above this spot of earth. It will be, by the mercy of God, infinite eternal gain; for it will be the gain of the infinite everlasting love of God. But it will also be infinite eternal loss; for it will be a loss of that measure of

the capacity of the infinite love of God, which the soul might have gained, but would not.

This is what the Apostle speaks of, the losses of the saved. It is, in one way, a more awful subject to us, than even Hell. We may, we trust in God's mercy, and I hope, rightly, escape from Hell. From this loss there is no escape, except by casting off our inured slothfulness, by becoming new men through the grace of God, by exchanging lukewarmness for burning love, slavery to the world for freedom in God, ambition of this world's glory and man's fleeting breath of praise, for ambition of the service of God and the praise of God; the dull routine of an unspiritual careless life, for a 'pressing onward towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

A late conversion after a wasted life will, if God vouchsafes it, save the soul from Hell, through the Blood of Jesus. Unless God Who is not bound by any laws of His creature time, should, together with His converting grace, pour love into the soul, surpassing all His ordinary measures and promises of grace, it will *not* regain for the soul the lost measure of its capacity of the love of God. This loss is the more awful, because it is irreparable.

Certainly what Scripture says of the saved has a very special awe of its own, because, here, we are in the province, not of God's mercy but of His All-holy Justice. It is by His infinite undeserved mercy in Christ Jesus, that we are saved at all. When we have been saved, the reward is according to our works. The 'penny' of everlasting life is given freely to all,

who to the end reject not God; nay who, having rejected Him, do at the last yield up their rebellion to His mercy, and embrace it. The two or the five talents denote the eminence of glory, by which He rewards the diligent use of the gifts, distributed by God to each, in proportion to his capacity to receive them.

'They,' says St. Gregory[b], 'who do not labour equally in the vineyard, all equally receive the penny. There are indeed with the Father many mansions, and yet the unequal labourers receive the same penny; because all will have one beatitude of joy, although all will not have one sublimity of life.' All will have the beatific vision of our God; all will have access to the ever-unfolding treasures of His Infinite Wisdom; all will be inundated with the transporting fulness of His love. But all will not be able alike to contain it. There will be narrow, stunted capacities of souls there, as there are narrow, often self-stunted intellects here.

What then I wish you to dwell upon with me this evening, is not the horrible risk of hell, which a careless or worldly ambitious life involves. True as this is, perhaps the very good which is in you, may indispose you to think of it. Though not, as you yourselves feel, fit for heaven, where '[c]nothing defiled can enter,' you are not yet, by God's mercy, fit for Hell.

But what I would ask you to think of with me, are (1) the certain dreadful sufferings of the Day of Judgment to some who shall be saved; (2) the certain irremediable loss, which some, who shall be saved,

[b] Lib. iv. in Job n. 70. [c] Rev. xxi. 27.

shall learn in that day that they have brought upon themselves.

Of the Day, of which St. Paul speaks, there is no doubt. It is the Day of the Judgment of God, whether it be the particular judgment upon each of us, when we part out of this life, or whether it be that general judgment of all, which shall gather into one, and exhibit before men and Angels all the teaching of all those special judgments, showing to all, that the Judge of all doeth right in all which He doeth.

Of that Day, Holy Scripture most commonly speaks, adding some word of awe or terror. But St. Paul also calls it 'The Day.' '[d] He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him unto That Day.' '[e] There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day.' He prays for Onesiphorus, '[f] The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that Day.' It is '*the* Day'; because upon it hangs our eternity, our eternal doom, the measure (if by God's mercy we are saved) of our eternal bliss. Time and change will be no more; growth belongs to this our trial-time. Thenceforth our mansion in the heavenly Court will be determined; our place among our Angelic fellow-citizens in bliss will have been assigned us. We shall have been fixed in our unchangeable proportion of bliss.

Now the special characteristic of this description of the Day of Judgment, is, that it relates to the saved, to those who have builded upon the 'Foundation,

[d] 1 Tim. i. 12. [e] Ib. iv. 8. [f] Ib. i. 18.

which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' There is indeed a special reference to such of us, as have had or shall have the office of teachers committed to us. But this does not hinder that larger sense, in which we all have to raise a building for God, wherein He will be pleased to dwell; our own souls. And the principle, both ways, is one and the same; that we may be so building on Him, the true Foundation, as to be saved, and yet may, through our own fault and our own free choice, suffer, in that Day of trial, pain unspeakable, and incur endless irremediable loss.

And *this* pain and loss will not come to us through sins which separate men from Christ. For he speaks of those who built these light worthless materials upon that 'One Foundation which is Christ.' Nay those who build them can persuade themselves, all along, that they are building *upon* Christ, *to* Christ, until the scorching fire of the Day of Judgment shall undeceive them.

Day by day, and year by year, men will have gone on, laying tier after tier of this their spiritual building, which, on account of their real belief in Christ and their trust in Him, they thought enduring. They built on and on; whether they had, from time to time, misgivings, is not said. I can hardly think that God left them without such visitations. But if they had, they stifled them. For they builded on unto the end. But it was 'like a dream, when one awaketh.' Only they awoke in the Day of their Judgment; and the fire was around their habitation: all that they had builded perished to the Foundation,

and they themselves escaped, so as by fire, scorched, half-consumed, yet saved.

And yet they must all the while have been earnest in their way; perhaps they were praised, and the praise blinded them the more. Some of them may be had in reputation until now; they may 'have left names behind them.' Men speak highly of 'posthumous fame': they have toiled for it: they talk of it as the ambition of noble souls. O if the departed still know of what passes on this our earth, what a hideous scornful mockery must that posthumous fame be, when the temple, whose inscription it is, has collapsed in ashes amid the fires of the Judgment Day. And all is perished.

A life-long labour perished! It is piteous, even when we hear of it in this life, when the temporal end, for which a man has toiled all his life, crashes at last. But remediless! And for eternity! It is too terrible; only our God tells it us, that it may not be true to us.

Plainly, there must have been self-deceit about it. For, not without a man's own will and his own fault, would God have allowed such an one to remain so deceived to the end. Yet one cannot name 'self-deceit' without bringing the case painfully near to us all, because the reign of self-deceit, at least its range, is so universal. '[g]The heart,' says the Holy Ghost, 'is deceitful above all things, and incurable. Who can know it?' 'I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins, and that to give to every man according to his

[g] Jer. xvii. 9, 10.

ways, according to the fruit of his doings.' God here too connects the individuality of His judgment and His retribution according to works, with the deceitfulness of the human heart and its unsearchableness except by Himself. The idea of an unerring judgment implies the drawing off some veil which was on the conscience, a revelation of the soul to itself. To pronounce sentence is the issue of the judgment, not its process. To judge a whole life implies unveiling the whole life. Probably, scarcely the very bad (unless God reveal it to them for the sake of others) believe that they deserve or shall incur Hell. Certainly, no one of the saved would have any thought beforehand, what place in His Presence God would assign to him. Probably the Day of Judgment will shew both the value of things, which seemed valueless but were done out of pure love of God, and the valuelessness of things, about which we took the greatest pains, to which we consecrated most years, for which we were most praised, because what was human most crept in there. Probably then, we are all of us far more concerned in the things, which are to be burned up, than we at all like to think of. Yet better think *now*, than know for the first time *then*.

What then are things which shall not be burned, gold, silver, costly stones? Now thus much is plain at first sight. First, they represent something costly; secondly, something very pure. Gold, which is to be used for the temple of God, must needs be well purified; the costly stones, if employed there, must needs have been severed from all which was not as precious

as they. Apart then from any symbolical meaning which either of them may have elsewhere in Holy Scripture (as the fire of love), one thing is plainly common to them all, perfect purity. They are of different values, the one of incomparably greater value than another, but all agree in this, that they are pure. Martyrdom; suffering for Christ; Evangelising; renunciation of the world for Christ and His poverty and Cross; Virginity; to spend and be spent; to give one's goods to feed the poor; all done for Christ, from the cup of cold water to the Martyr's chariot of fire, have their several values: but, on this one condition, that they be, each one, undertaken, done, lived in, suffered, purely for the love of God. What else can we even imagine that God will reward? To get on in this world, to have wife and children, to lay up for old age, to provide for a family, to be kind to those who love us, to be good or perhaps not bad neighbours, to use worldly courtesy, to speak well of those who speak well of you—all things right or lawful in their way; but what have they to do with eternal reward? Simply, in themselves, nothing. They begin in this world and they end in this world. 'They *have* their reward.' Their object was some end of this world; it was gained; God, in the bounty of His Providence, gave it. Why should we look hereafter for a second reward from God, for doing what our own natural dispositions prompted us to do, which we did for ends quite apart from God, and which we should have done, had we never thought of Him? True, all these things, nay, things necessary to our existence, as eating and

drinking, may, if done to a supernatural end, the glory of God, have a supernatural value in God's sight and have their eternal reward. It is a sort of sacred proverb, 'It has great grace to do ordinary things extraordinarily well.' It is part of the love of our God, because the greater part of our life is spent in very ordinary things, and yet in each one of these ordinary things, we may please God, and gain greater grace and larger capaciousness for His endless Infinite love.

But then all our lives alike may be natural or supernatural. For all may be directed to our supernatural end, God; or to some natural end, an end of this world; all may be done with a view to pleasing God, or for ourselves or the world around us; all may be done well, to the utmost of our ability, by Divine grace, or all things secular may be done with our best natural ability, for their natural end; while spiritual things are done in a perfunctory way, to satisfy our consciences, or, as we think, to save our souls.

And as the outward acts must be in many, nay, even in the majority of cases the self-same, while the soul of the acts, which gives them their real value for eternity, is their relation to God, or the absence of such relation, then there is in them most large scope for self-deceit. What so common as to have mixed motives for our actions, or rather what so rare as to have any one motive for any one action, unless indeed it be a lower one? Thus one might help a poor man, out of human compassion, or because he expected it of one, or to get rid of his importunity, or

in condescension, or because it was right, or because others did, or it would be expected of one, or for fear of Hell, or to satisfy conscience, or out of Divine love, or because his hands are Christ's Hands, to receive our alms, or to have his prayers, or to make up for a sin or self-indulgence, or because he, by his thanksgiving, would glorify God, or because God the Holy Ghost put it into one's heart and one dared not turn away. Now since the range of motive is so large, the range of self-deceit must needs be large also. For although conscience may tell us at the time, 'you did *that* for such or such a secondary or poor motive,' no one likes to remember it, much less to count up all the like acts which we did from this or some other lower motive. The world praises us, and it is hard to think the world wrong, when it is kind and pleasant, all the more, because it is not its wont. Self-love suggests to us the memory of the act which was good, and forgets the motives; and that, all the more readily, because we sometimes act out of better motives, which self-love takes care to remember. Then too it keeps out of sight the mountains of daily self-indulgence, which throw a cold damp shade over these insulated acts of charity springing out of God's grace.

But the Day of Judgment must clear up all this. It not only is to '[h] bring to light the hidden things of darkness'; it will also 'make manifest the counsels of the hearts,' and then, as shall be the issue of that unveiling, 'shall every man have praise of God.'

[h] 1 Cor. iv. 5.

And since nothing can receive praise from God, which is not, more or less directly, more or less purely, done for God, whether as speaking in men's consciences by His natural and eternal law, or by whispers and solicitations of His grace (even when He is Himself unknown, as in the heathen world), or by His sensible drawings, or by habitual grace, or sense of duty, or by God-given instinct and generous impulse, then the Day of Judgment will, I fear, to very many of the saved, who now stand well with themselves, be a terrible discovery, how very little, in their whole lives, they have really done for love of God.

And this, I believe, to be what the Apostle means by those things which shall be burned up. Things they are of different degrees of lightness, by which different minds imposed upon themselves, as though they were of value when they were of none. But the most plausible will not leave a rack behind, more than the most openly worthless. Nay, it may be, that the most plausible, and seemingly the most solid, may have the most endurance of pain, both because the loss will be the more unexpected, and because there may be more of things offensive to God, not levity, but vanity or self-conceit, self-opinion or pride. For caprice has at least nothing systematic in it; but pride, vanity, self-will, self-pleasing are alas! powerful springs of action, which put themselves forth under an almost infinite variety of disguises, and are sure to be most busy there, where they are least suspected.

Nothing but a continued active habit of directing

our actions to God, such as results from offering them to God, morning by morning, for the day, and then renewing that direction often through the day, by some brief prayer as, 'For Thee, O Lord;' or continuous prayer for grace, will rescue some fragments of our acts from the unclean contact of those spiritual harpies, our besetting faults. And if this has not been so, and self-examination has been superficial, and has not been directed to our motives, then, what a terrible unveiling of ourselves to ourselves will the Day of Judgment be! God has in His mercy at times lifted up the veil beforehand, and shewn those who had wished to serve Him, how much of what they thought to be grace was mere natural activity. But to see first in the Day of Judgment, that life had been one great mistake; that so very little or nothing had been done purely for the love of God; that, of that little, something had been afterwards taken from God and given to the world, in some seeking for human praise; that, amid the wood, hay, stubble, of a whole life-time, there had been but a grain here and there of what was pure (oh, that it were but a little gold-dust or some chip of a costly stone), it would be a misery, to which all miseries of this life concentrated in one would be nothing.

And yet I have mentioned but the light side of the misery. For I have said nothing of the Look of Him, our Judge Who died for us, and of the sight of His Thorn-scarred Brow, and the Wounded Hands and Feet, which our sins rove wide asunder, and by which we would not let the wounds of our souls be

healed. I have said nothing of the blackness of the ingratitude, seen for the first time as a whole, side by side with that Awful Countenance of holy, reproachful Love. I have said nothing of the horrible sight of all our blacker ingratitude, in rude repulses of grace, in obstinate pertinacity of sin, in the insolent mockery of those courteous dismissals of God, which procrastination of stricter ways or of clearly perceived duties, or of turning to God altogether, involve; wherein the soul in fact says to God, 'when I have a more convenient season, I will call for Thee, my Creator.' No one, who can even imagine something of what God is, what the love of Jesus, what the blackness of the ingratitude of his own sin, but must feel sure that the sight would be so piercing, that soul and body would, in this life, part asunder through the intensity of the agony.

God has not revealed how long the Judgment shall last to each. It may be, that the whole evil of every act shall be shewn to us in one concentrated gaze (as life is shewn at times to those drowning), or it may be that the evil or imperfection of each deed will be shewn to us, one after the other, each burning in more deeply the lesson of the other, in a way which would, in this life, be unendurable. Origen's thought is not improbable, that under these materials, which are consumed more quickly or more slowly, God meant to teach us, as to the shorter or longer endurance of suffering ensuing on greater or lesser sin. "[1]The nature of sin is like the material,

[1] In Lev. Hom. xiv. n. 3, T. ii. p. 259, de la Rue.

consumed by the fire, built, the Apostle Paul saith, by sinners, who, on the foundation of Christ, build wood, hay, stubble. Wherein it is manifestly shewn, that some sins are so light, that they may be compared to stubble, wherein the fire, when approached, cannot abide long. Others are like hay, which too the fire consumes without difficulty, yet lingers there somewhat longer than in the stubble. Others are compared to wood, in which, in proportion to the crimes, the fire finds a great and lasting aliment. So then each sin, according to its quality or quantity, pays its just due of punishment.'

'He himself shall escape, yet so as by fire.' To see his work perish in the fire, then, will not be his only suffering. Whatever that fire be, he himself will be saved, even after the loss of all, by himself passing through it. 'It is said,' says St. Augustine[k], '"he himself shall be saved" yet so as by fire. And because it is said, "shall be saved," that fire is despised. Yet although they be saved by fire, more grievous will be that fire, than whatsoever man can suffer in this life. And ye know what bad men have suffered here, and can suffer; as much as the good can suffer. For what has not a malefactor, robber, adulterer, wicked, sacrilegious man endured by the law, which the Martyr hath not endured in the confession of Christ? The evils here then are much lighter; and yet see how men do whatever you bid them, sooner than endure them. How much better do what God commands, not to suffer those heavier sufferings.'

[k] In Ps. xxxvii. 2, 3.

Yet if the soul be saved, those sufferings too will have an end. Sufferings, of which Scripture so speaks, are not likely to be short. They are to burn out the dross of a life. They are to teach the soul the sinfulness of its sins for all eternity. They are to teach it to accept as the boundless love of God towards it, to be among the last in the kingdom of heaven, as the highest place, which God in His Righteousness could give it.

But what if there be, as some fathers have thought, suspense in that day? What if the soul sees its imagined goods vanish one by one, in that awful fire, and know not the issue? What if it have to doubt, whether it have builded on the Foundation at all? What if this doubt endure, God knows how long, when minutes of our time shall seem an interminable existence? Human thought can conceive nothing terrible enough for that Day, which God has pronounced so terrible. Yet the terrors too will have an end. The losses will, in all eternity, have no end. The graces, purchased by the Blood of Jesus, have been refused, wasted, and cannot then be recalled. God did all He could do, without forcing the soul's free-will, and it was cast aside for human praise or self-conceit and vanity. We shall know then, why there can be no second trial-time. Here we know only that there is none. As we sow, so shall we reap. '[1]Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.'

[1] 2 St. John 8.

Ye are young still; ye have open, generous hearts; you would not simply escape Hell. You would fulfil the end for which God created, endowed, redeemed, called, justified you, for which He made each of you just that self which He has made you. Look then well, what is the end of what you do. Is it simply some form of self? or is it, God? Are you living mere natural lives, or are you stirring up the gift which is in you, the grace of God, which was lodged in you, when you were made members of Christ, the fruit of *His* Presence within you Whose temples ye were made, God the Holy Ghost? It may be that the body of the life which you are leading is, in the main, in the right direction; that you would not knowingly do what would separate you from God. God be thanked, if, thus far, you have remained or have returned under His sheltering care. But look to the soul of thine acts. See, if thy first fresh thought is, 'So God wills;' 'How shall I best please Him?' 'Can I do this better for Him?' or whether you are living a mere listless, soulless round of mechanical employments, amusements, perhaps, in their turn, but with no effort to concentrate thyself on the will of God for thee, the end for which Jesus bought thee at so dear a price, for which God the Holy Ghost is so prodigal of His gifts and calls.

I have not spoken of that dread hopeless place, which is the sinner's doom, except to hope that you all will, by God's mercy, escape it. Even of this it is no good token to be secure. For many alas! as are on that broad road, few think it of themselves,

and *they* least fear it, for whom it is most to be feared. I have been speaking only of sufferings which, in the Day of Judgment, overtake very many of those who were perhaps never severed from Christ.

And of these, the suffering is the least evil. For to wake up to the sight that one had loved our Good Lord with only half a heart, and so had less power of love to love Him, would be worse than the pains of Hell, if any there could love Him.

In presence of death, now brought present to us[m], give one earnest gaze at the Judgment Day; see its blazing fires burn up all which is not in some way done for God, and ask whether thou wouldest wish to be that scorched stunted soul, which should have the least possible capacity of the love and knowledge and the wisdom of God throughout eternity. If not, choose God with the will of thy soul, as He has chosen thee. Pray Him to seal thy choice; and all dull things in life will have fresh joys, everything will give you fresh occasion of shewing Him your love, everything will be to you a fresh channel of love, a fresh ground of thanksgiving. And you yourselves, though you would not know it nor believe it, while your defects grew but more visible to you, and you wondered, day by day, more at the monstrousness of our ingratitude to the tender love of our Father and our Redeemer, would, day by day, ripen in that love, which will seem to you so poor;

[m] The Master of Trinity, Dr. Whewell, had just died suddenly by a fall from his horse; his death was widely felt.

day by day will add a ray to that eternal crown of glory, for which God formed and re-formed you; day by day will, by God's grace, enlarge you to receive more and yet more of that Infinite Love which made you, redeemed you, seeks you, for His own love.

SERMON XVI.

THE MIRACLES OF PRAYER.

St. Matthew xxi. 22.

'All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.'

Can man change the mind of God? Will God, on the prayer of man, change any part of that wondrous order which He has impressed upon His fair visible creation?

I seemed to myself to be but putting the questions which perplex the minds (I must say) of those who do not pray; and see, I am at once plunged in the mysteries of man's free-will, and as to that course of mysterious tokens of God's presence which we call miracles. I did not mean it. Yet so are God's ways towards us interwoven together, even because He is our Father and our Creator and we are His children, that what is said of one effect of this our blessed relation necessarily has bearings upon others. Objectors meant only to touch upon one subject of prayer. Yet one could not formulise their objection, without being carried off into those other mysteries of man's

free-will in the presence of God's absolute and eternal knowledge, and of God's wondrous doings in the material world, whether it comports with the wisdom of God that He should change ought in His own creation. And so perhaps God would bring us back from hard and abstract questions to the gracious experience of every-day life, and would give us the solution of our difficulties, in what we may ourselves see, touch, handle, experience, know.

First then, in effect, God does through man's acts become other to him than He was before.

The voice of conscience echoes the voice of God's law, that we sinners, while we remain sinners, are the objects of God's displeasure. Conscience cries aloud, enforces it; she reiterates it, when silenced; she awakens in agony, when she has been stupefied; and, even when deadened and buried under accumulated sin, she lives anew by a spiritual resurrection. When our Lord's voice of power, 'Lazarus come forth,' has penetrated the dead soul, and with penitence for its own ingratitude, has infused love for its Redeemer, and He, by Himself or by His minister, has said, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee,' the soul knows and feels that its relation to God and God's relation to it are changed.

And for our second question, observe that this change itself cannot be without prayer. The first voice is of Jesus to the soul, 'Come unto Me, thou weary and heavy laden, and I will give thee rest;' the second is of the soul to Jesus, 'Lord, save me; I perish.' Still the relation of the soul to God is

changed. Had it perished in its sins it must have been shut out for ever from the presence of God, hating God and the object of His malediction; 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' Now, God is its Friend, its Counsellor, its Illuminer, its Engracer, its Indweller. Plainly the fact that Jesus did first speak to the soul, shews that the soul, although at enmity with God, a desolator of His creation, a denier (perhaps in theory too, but in practice certainly) of Himself, too proud or too enslaved to endure the 'perfect freedom' of His ennobling service, a destroyer,—through passions of the flesh, which bowed it in the mire, or by propagating in its pride lessons of rebellion against Himself—a murderer of souls for whom Christ died—that soul must still have been in some sense an object of God's love and care. For, had it finally rejected God and been rejected by God, it could not have received that converting grace, which at last overwhelmed its resistance and brought the Prodigal Son back to the outstretched Arms of his Redeemer. Still the returned soul knows, that not only is its whole self changed towards God, but that the relations and actions of God towards it are also changed. That unknown calm which spreads over the soul, that inward sweetness of Divine consolations, what betoken they, but that his Father has beheld him and had compassion and fallen on his neck and kissed him? He has received the kiss of peace. Before, God, except in merciful dispensations of His displeasure or soon-rejected solicitations of His grace, or His common benefits towards His creation,

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which might from without bear witness to Himself, was, as if there were no God. Now, all the treasures of His love, His grace, are open to it. The soul is united to its indwelling God.

And this change has often been wrought by Jesus through the prayers of others. Such is the love of God towards us, such the dignity which He bestows upon us, to be co-operators with Himself, that man's fervent cry for others who never pray for themselves, inspired by Himself, upheld by His own grace of 'hope against hope,' obtains that last first grace which won the hitherto obdurate rebel to Himself.

God's word guarantees this, when it bids us pray 'for all men,' because God '[a] will have all men to be saved.' God's word is justified in act by the known instances of those whose souls He has saved through prayers which He Himself inspired. Witness he, the great teacher of the Church till now, of whom, though unknown in the flesh and known only through the eminence of his rebellion, it was said; '[b] it is not possible that the son of those tears should perish;' who himself, when converted, owned himself to be the fruit of those nine years' unbroken, unfaltering prayers of his mother St. Monnica[c], who lived for his conversion and, when this object of her being was accomplished, yielded up her own soul to God[d].

Which are greatest, the miracles of nature or the miracles of grace? which is the greatest interference

[a] 1 Tim. ii. 1-4. [b] St. Aug. Confess. iii. end.
[c] Conf. ix. 8, and other places quoted ib. p. 169, n. n. Oxf. Tr.
[d] Ib. 10, 11, pp. 175, 6.

(to use man's word), to change passive unresisting nature, or man's strong, energetic, resisting will, which God Himself so respects, that He will not force the will, which He has endowed with freedom, that it might have the bliss, freely to choose Himself? Which is the mightiest noblest work, to condense, if so be, the operations of nature, and change the water into wine, without the intervening process of its passing through the vine, or to change the wolf into the lamb, the blasphemer and constrainer to blaspheme into the Apostle, the persecutor of Jesus in His disciples, into him to whom to live was Christ and to be crucified with Christ, who became the servant of all, that he might win the more to Christ and to life? or again to change the slave of degrading passion, its fires yet unspent, into the saint; the spirit, entangled in the wild God-degrading fanaticism of the Manichees into the clear God-enlightened teacher and oracle of the Church, now for 1400 years?

Or again, to take the greatest miracle in the province of nature, which is greatest,—to recall into the body the departed soul, to re-animate it again for some few years and then again (except in the case of our Lord) to depart from it until the Resurrection at the Great Day, or to transform the soul, dead in its sins, into the life of God, to gain for it a life which shall never die, a brightness and brilliancy of Divine life which shall never fade, an union with God which the dissolution of the body from the soul shall not dissolve nor interrupt, but which shall live on for ever, to be perfected in the beatific vision of Himself and the

never-ending ever-unfolding communication of Himself throughout eternity?

And therefore it probably was, that our Lord promised to His Apostles, '[e] He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father.' He reserved to Himself after His Atoning Death a greater work than He accomplished in life; not the imperfect impression upon a multitude among the Jews who were to the end like 'reeds shaken by the wind,' crying now 'Hosanna,' then 'Crucify Him,' but the solid conversion, regeneration, sanctification of souls among all nations to God. Truly they are greater works. For deeper-seated is spiritual blindness than bodily, more malignant and more inveterate are the diseases of the soul than those of the body. A small thing were it to restore the hearing of the outward ear, compared with the healing of that inward deafness, whereby a person is, by man incurably, deaf to the Voice of God. A small thing is it, to make one lame from his mother's womb to walk (notable as the miracle was), compared to that infusion of Divine strength which, running through the whole moral frame, heals the paralysis of the sin-stricken soul, empowers the enthralled will, enables it to trample on the sin which held it fast motionless to good, and gladly and freely, self-sacrificing, to run the way of the all-holy law of the love of God.

And yet these stupendous spiritual miracles are daily renewed. The love of the Church, of the Pastor,

[e] St. John xiv. 12.

the mother, the combined prayers of those whom God has inspired with the love of souls, draw down on the prodigal soul many a wasted or half-wasted grace, until at last God in His Providence has laid the soul open to the influence of His grace, and the soul, obstructing no more the access to Divine grace, is converted to God, and lives. These are certain spiritual facts; facts, as certain in the history of souls as any other facts are in the province of science. In appealing to them, I have appealed to what is now acknowledged to be the basis of all true physical philosophy, the induction of facts. Men speak of physical miracles or unusual interventions in nature, as incredible, being (it is thought), in this our age, contrary to experience; and I have appealed to our experience of what, I believe, our Lord calls yet greater miracles, the miracles of Divine Grace, called forth by that to which God has given such guaranteed power with Himself, prayer in the Name of Jesus. And these facts as to the soul establish these things. First, (what every one in the grace of God may know as to himself) a very minute superintending Providence as to the well-being and course of life of the creatures whom God has made. Secondly, a direct intervention of God, freely acting upon the free soul, which, freely but responsibly, responds or does not respond to that intervention. Thirdly, the widely-established truth, that that intervention of God has been granted to prayer, which God had inspired and had pledged Himself to hear. Men seem to think, as to some outskirts of His ways with us (such as these His temporal visita-

tions under which many are now suffering), that prayer is presumptuous, as interfering with relations which He has given to His inanimate creation, and I have pointed to that interference (to use men's word) with the relation of the soul to Himself, which He has allowed to the invested omnipotence of prayer through our Almighty Intercessor.

But it is said that '[f] we do not pray, when we know that God has assigned fixed laws to His creation (as that the sun should not rise to-morrow), and that therefore, it being assumed that all creation is under fixed laws, our prayers are only the result of our ignorance.'

True, that we do not pray that the sun should not rise to-morrow; yet not merely on account of the fixed laws, but because unvarying laws, unless we have some distinct indication to the contrary, betoken that such is the mind of God. '[g] They abide this day according to Thine ordinance, for all things serve Thee.' We know too, in this instance, that it is not yet the will of God, that this birth-place of souls, redeemed by the Blood of Christ, should come to an end. But when the time shall come of the 'great tribulation' at the end, in which our Lord has foretold to us that '[h] for the elects' sake, the days shall be shortened,' and the day shall draw nigh, when '[i] the heavens shall pass

[f] Although I have, in this Sermon, noticed Prof. Tyndall's arguments, nothing which I say is to be misconstrued as implying any opinion whatsoever as to his personal faith as to prayer, of which I can know nothing.

[g] Ps. cxix. 91.

[h] St. Matt. xxiv. 22. [i] 2 Pet. iii. 10.

away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works therein shall be burned up,' then doubtless if (as it seems) the close of that trial-time is to be the close of the earth itself, those elect, of whom God speaks, *will* pray that the sun shall rise no more upon this earth, such as it now is, so soon as His wisdom shall see good; and that prayer, God, Who shall shorten the days, He tells us, for their sake, shall hear.

But it is said further, 'It is agreed on both sides, that we do not in these days ask for physical miracles,' and 'these,' it is said, 'are miracles.' If, by miracles, men mean such interpositions as involve a new creative power (such as the multiplying of the loaves), without entering into special cases, they do not ordinarily fall under our Lord's promise, '[k] believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them.' If God willed to grant them, He would first give the gift of faith. But if by miracles be meant such interpositions as exceed or modify the ordinary operations of nature, then one cannot doubt that God does, when it seems good to Him, inspire the prayer of faith which He wills to hear. For it is certain that many of those interpositions, which are popularly called 'answers to prayer,' have wrought what no skill of the skilful physican could effect.

But is it so certain that there are any such absolutely fixed laws for all those other lesser variations of the physical conditions of the atmosphere, which are the ordinary channels of God's temporal mercies or of His

[k] St. Mark xi. 24.

visitations? There is no apparent contradiction in supposing, that God should have fixed, once for all, those relations which by their magnificent regularity, or by the unchangeableness of their properties, attest that their Author is a God of order, the Fountain of all order; and yet that He who loves us with such a tender love, and counts nothing too minute for His care which bears on the well-being of the creatures which He has made, should, in those things, which in merciful discipline or in His free bounty direct men's thoughts to Him, the Author of our being and its End, have assigned to them no unvarying rules; that their law should be a moral rather than a physical law; that He should so adapt them as by them too to teach His rational creatures the blissful lesson of dependence on Himself. It may be, that the variableness of the one set of phænomena is as much intended by God to teach us that they are distributed by a moral law of adaptation to our moral being or necessities, as the invariableness of His fixed laws are to shadow to us His unchangeableness. Certainly men seem to me to have made an idol of fixed laws, or rather of their own discovery of those laws, when they would leave nothing to God free in His own creation. Their claim involves nothing less than this, that not the proximate causes only, but the sequence of all these natural phænomena, in each of their all-but-infinite multiplicity of variations and combinations, has, since man was placed upon this earth, followed in as fixed and prescribed a course, as the rising and setting of the sun has upon the love to which God has subjected the

motions of this earth. To me it seems more philosophical in itself to conceive of a Will (in this case that of God) governing, directing, adapting, dispensing freely, that which is variable, and an unchanging Will, establishing and upholding that which abideth. Anyhow science can come to no certainty as to this, which some allege, in its name, as rendering prayer as to outward things a contradiction to science. For science relates to things wherein the relations of causes and effects are known; but human intelligence can decypher—not the whole, but—only certain proximate causes in that vast system of an all-but-infinite variety of phænomena which probably only its Infinite Author can know perfectly. And since science cannot know the whole, it can but guess, or infer more or less probably to itself, that all the most variable phænomena proceed on laws, fixed from the creation of the world, inasmuch as human science cannot know, cannot grasp, that which bears the image of the infinity of their Author.

Yet whether or no God have ordained, in all the variety of their combinations, all the ultimate causes of the unceasing changes in this our atmosphere—changes so unceasing that, probably, since the creation no two years have been exactly alike; whether or no He have left nothing free to His own agency without interfering with that series of laws, which He has Himself prescribed; in another sense all is certain. For God, the Author of all, without Whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground, knows perfectly in His own serene Omniscience all which He shall

ever do. What follows then? What but this, that no fixity of physical laws would aggravate in the least that original difficulty, insoluble by us here below, which meets us at every step when we reflect on God and on ourselves, how man's free agency, which we know and feel, is compatible with the certain knowledge of God? For we who believe the moral government of God, must believe, that if God have ordained any such fixed laws at all, He Who in all eternity knew all alike, both that vast system of His physical creation before it was, and the ill and good deserts of His rational creature, man, so adjusted beforehand the exact laws of those physical phænomena to the moral conduct of His creatures, that, in all the series of their history everywhere, the good or evil, the chastisement or free mercy, should coincide with the condition and conduct of His intelligent creature, whom He had placed here, amid all these fleeting things, to be prepared by all their varied discipline for His own blessed-making Presence.

Whether the whole sequence of natural phænomena follow a fixed order of Divine law, impressed once for all upon His creation by the Almighty *fiat* of God, or whether the proximate causes of which we are cognisant are the result of the ever-present action of the Divine will, independently of any such system, these are but the ways of acting of the Omniscient. *The* difficulty lies in the Omniscience itself, which knew all things which were not as though they were. He knew, in all eternity, the sins of Ahab and his people, and the prayer of Elijah, upon which He for

three years withheld and then gave the rain; or that David would leave in His hands the choice of the seven years of famine, or the three days of pestilence. In all eternity He knew the sins of Pharaoh and his evanescent repentance, upon which He brought the locusts with the East wind, and, at Moses' prayer, carried them away with the West wind. In all eternity He knew that discriminating dispensation, by which He '[1] caused it to rain upon one city and caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon and the piece which was not rained upon, withered.' In that eternity He knew the varying obedience or disobedience of His people, to which He annexed the gift or the denial of fruitful seasons. The continued belief of His people during all those centuries attests the fulfilment of his promises or threats. [m] In that eternity He knew, whether His creatures would or would not pray to Him in their needs, and, if He fixed the laws at all, appointed them, as should befit the foreseen conduct of His creatures. The fact (if it be such), that God has fixed, in the laws of the Universe, that course of things, which shall correspond, in His justice or mercy, to our use or neglect of prayer, our humiliation before Him or our contempt of Him, no more interferes with our free-agency in

[1] Amos. iv. 7.

[m] I have not been afraid to remove the difficulty as to *one* subject of prayer, (viz. as to God's natural dispensations), to *all* prayer. (1) because it is true; (2) because it is always right to own truth, and the difficulty, although insoluble to reason, which has not the data here below whereby to solve it, is none in the face of God's Word, which affirms so manifoldly that God does hear prayer, and the facts which bear witness to ourselves, that He does.

praying or not praying, than any other event of His Providence precludes our freedom. Who doubts but that God knew beforehand that awful winter, which cut off half a million of the flower of French chivalry? But whether that winter, which stood alone in the history of Russian climate, came only in the natural sequel of some fixed laws, or whether it was owing to the immediate *fiat* of God, directing the proximate causes of that terrible catastrophe, the adaptation of those natural phænomena to the chastisement of that suffering host was alike exact, the free-agency of its leader was alike unimpaired.

This, as I said, is no question as to human science, but as to the truth of God's word and His moral government of His creatures. The Word of God says nothing as to the questions of human science, whether or no He have assigned fixed laws to the atmospheric changes, upon which the fruitfulness of the earth and the health of man so much depend. Scripture lifts us up to a higher region. It answers not the Jewish question, 'How can these things be?' but it raises us to a nearness to the eternal Throne and shews us God, dispensing these accidents of our being, according to His own all-wise laws of attempered justice and mercy. By these laws, Scripture tells us, He gave witness of Himself to the heathen world which had forgotten Him. 'He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness[n].' This witness of Himself He pointed

[n] Acts xiv. 17.

yet more distinctly to that former people; '[o]If ye keep My commandments and do them, then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall give her increase,' or contrariwise He would make the heaven above them brass and the earth beneath them iron[p]. To their own experience as to this, Jeremiah appeals; '[q]Are there among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers?' Neither physical nature of itself, nor man's idols could give rain, when asked. 'Art not Thou He, O Lord our God? Therefore we will wait upon Thee; for Thou hast made all these things.' He Who had made them could alone dispense them. It was an Evangelic prophet, whose soul lived in Gospel times, who, after describing an Evangelic repentance[r], said, '[s]The Lord will answer and say unto His people, Behold I will send you corn and wine and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith.' It is a prophet after the captivity, by whom God says, after calling to repentance in deed; '[t]Consider now, is the seed yet in the barn? Yea, as yet the vine and the fig-tree, the pomegranate and the olive-tree hath not brought forth. From this time will I bless you.' It is the Prophet in whom Old Testament '[u]prophecy expired with the Gospel on its tongue,' by whom God said, '[x]Prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if

[o] Lev. xxvi. 3, 4, add Deut. xi. 13–15, xxviii. 11, 12.
[p] Deut. xxviii. 23. [q] Jer. xiv. 22.
[r] Joel ii. 12, 13. [s] Ib. 18, 19. [t] Hagg. ii. 18, 19.
[u] Davison on Prophecy, Disc. vi. P. iv. p. 457.
[x] Mal. iii. 10.

I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.'

Why should this seem strange? Which was made for the other, the material for the immaterial, or the immaterial for the material? Doubtless the material world too, in its magnificent variety of beauty, shadows out something of that eternal Beauty which is in God; but man alone was formed in the Image of God. What were all physical creation and material laws, compared to the dignity of man, to whom angels are '[y]ministering spirits'; into the course of whose salvation '[z]Angels desire to look'; who, at least in God's own servants, are 'a [a]spectacle to Angels'; through whom '[b]unto principalities and powers in heavenly places' is 'made known the Manifold Wisdom of God'; for whom and for whose salvation God became Man; for whom, being God and Man, Jesus died?

But it is said, 'the argument of the Divine Free-Will would apply equally well to the beliefs of ancient heathen and modern savages, who saw and see in almost every change of the aspects of nature the hand of an arbitrary deity.' To conceive of any act of God as arbitrary, would be, of course, to deny His justice or wisdom or love. To thank God for each successive gift of His beneficence, is the simple act of the Christian's child-like heart. But whatever error there was or may be in the belief of persons, superstitious be-

[y] Heb. i. 14. [z] 1 Pet. i. 12.
[a] 1 Cor. iv. 9. [b] Eph. iii. 10.

cause not religious, the admixture of accidental error overlays but does not destroy the underlying essential truth. Contrariwise, I doubt much whether any widespread belief was ever destitute of some basis of sustaining truth. 'The true, the beautiful, the good, every object of philosophy,' says a striking writer[c], 'reveal themselves continually, readily, but obscurely to mankind. Hence those vague notions; those beliefs, confused but deep; those sentiments, indistinct but powerful, on the highest subjects, which ferment silently in all classes of society, and govern it at all times.' '[d]Great philosopher as a man may be, the odds are that he will be in the wrong, if opposed to the spontaneous affirmation of the human race.'

Once more, the availableness of prayer has been contrasted with the availableness of human remedies, its unavailableness has been insisted upon, if combined with human sloth[e]. Who bade separate trust in God

[c] M. Jouffroy, quoted in M. Caro, L'idée de Dieu et ses nouveaux critiques, p. 473.

[d] M. Caro, p. 474.

[e] 'But you will at all events admit that the [hypothetic] prayer [against small-pox], as a preservative or remedial agent, proved no match for vaccination. Would the suppliant voice of a whole nation have atoned for the bad engineering, or caused a suspension of the laws of hydraulic pressure, in the case of the Bradfield reservoir?'—Professor Tyndall. To the first, it has been answered, that, very possibly, the discovery of vaccination was itself God's gift on prayer. It is most natural (and the belief is impressed on systems outside of Christianity), to think that good and wise thoughts of all sorts, and the discoveries of science too, are the result of God's illumining action on the mind. To the objection as to the 'Bradfield reservoir,' it has been answered (Pall Mall Gazette, Oct. 28), 'the suppliant voice of a whole nation, or even of a single man, might have made all the difference in the thoroughness

from the exertions of duty? Certainly not He Who, even in our highest concerns, the salvation of our souls, bade us [f]work out our salvation with fear and trem-

of the original construction, or of the subsequent inspection of the Bradfield reservoir, and so prevented the calamity.' But besides this, all the instances given relate to the proximate cause and effect, which does not come into the question as to prayer, which might be answered while God preserved that relation between the proximate cause and effect. E. g. it was observed, some years ago, that the cholera advanced from India in a certain zig-zag course, which seemed to imply electric agency. Now, whatever physical agency brought the cholera, to pray God to check the cholera, while that agent was at work, would be to ask Him to interpose between the proximate cause and its effect; but it would not be, if any prayed Him simply to remove it, because this would be only to ask Him to do what might be done by altering those electric currents (if such were the cause), or the wind, or whatever it was, which brought the infection from East to West. Or to take a case where cause and effect are certain, an East wind brought locusts into Egypt or a South wind would bring them into Palestine, if they were already winged in those countries, whence those winds would bring them. Contrariwise a Westerly wind would carry them back from Egypt to the Red Sea, or a North wind from Palestine to the Dead Sea or the Arabian desert, or an East wind into the Mediterranean. The objection presupposes that the blowing of each wind on a given day is subject to laws as fixed as the wind's carrying the locusts, *if there*. We should not pray that the equinoctials should not blow in any year, because their uniform occurrence is a token that it is part of God's Will that they should blow twice in the year; but this does not shew that we might not in Palestine have prayed that God should take away the locusts, though they could only be taken away by a change of wind, because, as to these winds, we have no reason to think that it is against the mind of God to change them as we may need. See remarkable instances of such a change from St. Jerome and Alvarez (do Preste Joan, das Indias c. 32) as to what they had themselves seen (in Pusey on Joel p. 123). As to this present visitation, the prayer would be heard, if either God should discover to us the cause, so that we might ourselves find its remedy, or should remove the agent (if so be) by any atmospheric change.

[f] Phil. ii. 12, 13.

bling; *for* it is God, Which worketh in us to will and to do of His Good Pleasure.' God, in His wondrous condescension, willeth the free co-operation of man. He willeth, in human things as in Divine, that we should use to the utmost the powers and capacities which He has lodged in us, yet not as if we were lords, not He, but in blessed dependence upon Himself. '[g]Act and pray, pray and act; expect all of God, yet neglect neither care, nor desires, nor efforts. This order is wise, is grand, is beautiful. It comprises the economy of Providence, the very condition of His government, the covenant of God with man.'

But 'we have prayed and have not been heard, at least as to the present visitation.' Have we deserved to be heard? In former visitations, it was observed commonly how the cholera lessened from the day of the public humiliation. When we dreaded famine from long-continued drought, on the morning of our prayers, the heaven over our head was as brass; the clear burning sun shewed no token of change; men looked with awe at its unmitigated clearness[h]. In the evening was the cloud like a man's hand; the relief was come.

And now what have we done? what are we doing? When the Ninevites were threatened, they did not take the cheap way of saying a prayer, twice, it may be, in a week. They fasted as well as prayed, bore

[g] Ravignan, 38me conférence, T. ii. p. 594.

[h] This describes what I myself saw on the Sunday morning in Oxford, on returning from the early Communion at St. Mary's at 8. There was no visible change till the evening.

hardness, shewed their repentance by self-affliction, and, withal, they put away their heathen besetting sin; '[i]They turned from their evil way,' 'and from the violence that was in their hands.' 'And God,' it is said, 'repented of the evil that He said He would do unto them, and did it not.' What of this repentance, which our Lord praised[k], has there been among us? No one can deny our reigning national sins, the sins of prosperity,—pride, idolatry of wealth, neglect of God's poor, varied, hideous, cruel, degrading fruits of sensuality, and (what might be the basis of a grace, if ensouled by the Spirit of God) strong self-confidence. What in our week-day life is more in harmony with our Sunday prayers? To pray for the removal of God's fatherly chastisement, without amendment, is to pray Him to abandon us to ourselves, —to perish.

Of His impenitent people, when the sin is come to the uttermost, God said to Jeremiah, '[l]Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me; for I will not hear thee.' God hears such prayers, by refusing them.

Prayers for temporal mercies or for the averting of temporal ills must needs be conditional, because we know not whether what we ask is for our good, and then indeed, to grant them would be to give us 'stone for bread.'

But such being the arms, with which God's Omnipotence has entrusted us, such being the power

[i] Jonah iii. 8–10. [k] St. Matt. xii. 41. [l] Jer. vii. 16.

with which He has invested prayer over Himself, are we, who believe, without blame, not only as to the unbelief in the efficacy of prayer[m], but as to all the desolating miseries of the varied assaults upon faith? To what end did God give us this power of prayer? For ourselves alone? The God of love, He Whose nature it is to communicate Himself, He Who, being Good, doeth good, will that we should be saved alone! Impossible. He Who has bidden us pray for all, wills that we, for each of whom He died as though there were none besides, yet for whom He died as one, should each gain our own salvation, aiding in the salvation of our brethren. He who prays not for others, shuts himself out from the prayers of others.

[m] 'Both your correspondents seem to think, that scientific discovery may be the result of a prayer. If this be believed, I will only say, the bearing of Theology towards science at the present day is as unpardonable as it is unaccountable.'—Professor Tyndall's 2nd letter. I do not know what bearing of Theology towards science, Professor Tyndall meant. But, looking on all knowledge as the gift of God, knowing too how a discovery, and indeed all the wisest thoughts of any, come by a sort of inspiration (i.e. they flash on the mind without any effort of its own, or any conscious agency of the mind except that of receiving them); knowing too how much a person's whole habit of mind has to do with the theories which he forms, and (quite apart from details as to the interpretation of Holy Scripture on subjects connected with physics) how much effect a man's belief in God must have upon his whole intellectual being; knowing lastly, what power prayer for others may have upon their minds, and how it may obtain for others the gift of faith;—I cannot but confess, that any cold looking-on upon the progress of science, or any mere suspicion of scientific men whom we may fear to have lost their faith, without prayer for them, is contrary to our principles, and belongs to fatalism rather than to faith. Their real discoveries are, of course, matter of thanksgiving, as disclosing, each, some portion of the wisdom of God.

To mistrust the success of prayer for others, is want of faith; to believe in prayer for others, yet not use so costless yet so vast a charity, is want of love. How can we be saved without faith or love, and enter, selfish and alone, into the Bosom of the love of God?

Faith, if not love, has probably been weak, in the presence of that strong tide of half-belief, mis-belief, unbelief, which has so largely occupied every sort of literature. We have disputed, more or less, the intermediate battle-field. We have set array against array. We have trusted to truth to win its own victories. Have we used the arms of Omnipotence to turn the assailants of truth into its defenders?

And yet, two sorts of prayers are absolutely infallible—prayers for one's own spiritual good in the Name of Jesus, and prayers for the spiritual good of others. It is not only a promise. It is a prophecy, fulfilled and to be fulfilled to the end. He, our Redeemer, 1800 years ago, He Who was, in outward form, the carpenter's Son and the Carpenter, but Who claimed the love, the adoration, the fealty of the whole world to the end of time, staked His own infallibility upon it. So it had been prophesied of Him[n], 'all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him; *for* He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.' So He Himself prophesied to His own to the end, '[o]Whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do.' 'If ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do

[n] Ps. lxxii. 11, 12. [o] St. John xiv. 13, 14.

it.' '[p]Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'

He gave that pledge of His truth to those millions upon millions, and million millions upon million millions, that no one should ever ask Him, or in His Name, in vain. Had He not had power and Will to fulfil it, any *one*, who prayed and failed, would have falsified His prophecy. But it could not be falsified; for He was Almighty God. 'This,' said one of His first disciples who had lived towards one hundred years, of his own knowledge and by inspiration of God, '[q]This is the confidence which we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His Will, He heareth us.' But His Will is, that 'all men should be saved, and should come to the knowledge of the Truth.' One only thing God will not do. He will not violate the sacredness of the free-will of man. He will not drag him, like a stock or a stone. But, if prayed, He will solicit his free-will; He will secretly draw him; He will dispose him by His grace; He will all-but force him. And if one interpose, of his own free-will, a bar to His grace, the prayer will not return void. It will persevere till the end, and if he, for whom it is prayed, place not the hindrance of his own refusing will unto the end, it will be heard and will save. This is thought to be the meaning of those words, '[r]If any man see his brother sin a sin not unto death,' i. e. it is thought, a sin in which a man does not will to persevere unto death, 'he shall

[p] St. Matt. vii. 7. [q] 1 John v. 14. [r] Ib. 16.

ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death.' For all, except the obstinate will to persevere in sin unto death, the promise is absolute. We pray that God '[s]will bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived'; pray we earnestly, fervently, perseveringly; we pray, not with our own feeble prayers alone, but with Him, our Almighty Intercessor, Whose claims for us are not of mercy but of justice; Who, when yet in the Flesh, said to His Father, '[t]I know that Thou hearest Me always.' We pray, with prayer given us by God the Holy Ghost, Who '[u]maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered'; and the face of things may soon be changed. God the Holy Ghost, Who knoweth the hearts of men, will light in tongues of fire, if not, as in the day of Pentecost, on the whole multitude at once, yet on those whose hearts are most open to the truth, now on this, now on that, as He did some thirty years ago, and you may see the meridian of that day of His glory and of faith of Him, of which, after this recent night, we now see but the dawn. Pray our Lord's own prayer for us, that we '[x]all may be one,' and He will present anew His own prayer to the Father; He Himself will fulfil it. 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, I will do it.' And the once-more-united Church shall have a power in witnessing for the truth, which, in its partial severance, is weakened. But nothing will return void. It is not according to the Mind of God,

[s] Litany.
[t] St. John xi. 42.
[u] Rom. viii. 26.
[x] St. John xvii. 21.

that we, to whom He has given the glorious light of His Gospel, should sink back into the ignorance or scepticism of pagan reason before it was ennobled with the gifts from on high. Men's hearts are with the truth. Truth is of God. God, Who is the Primæval Truth, made the soul in His own image, and so she must needs long for Him in Whose image she was made, and must in her inmost depths yearn for that truth, which is an effluence from Himself. 'y Thou madest us for Thyself, O God, and our heart' must needs be 'restless, until it repose in Thee.'

But, one soul there is, for which thy prayers are absolutely infallible; for which God has bound Himself to hear thee, as He is God; of which thou mayest be sure, that, God-enabled through thy prayer, it will, if thou willest, oppose no obstacle to grace; for which thou mayest be heard according to the eternal counsels of thy God, in love for thee;—thine own. Prayer is in itself almighty, infallible. Before thou hast uttered it, so soon as, through the grace of God, it is conceived in thy heart and embraced by thy will, it has ascended to the Eternal Throne. Already has it been presented to Him Who in all eternity loved thee and formed thee for His love. It has been presented by Him, Man with thee, Who, as Man, died for thee, Who, in His precious Death, prayed for thee, Man with thee, but also God with God. How should it fail? Thy prayer cannot fail, if thou, through thine own will, fail not thy prayer.

Whatever then thy trial be, whether in faith or in

y St. Aug. Conf. i. 1.

life, sit not thou down in despair either at the violence of thy temptations, or thine own self-chosen slavery to thine evil customs, or the weakness of thine own self-enervated will, or for perplexities as to the faith, or the plausibility of contradictions to it, or thine own inability to solve them, or, if it be so, thine own inured unbelief or scepticism, or the confidence of those who contradict and pronounce all certainty as to truth dogmatism, or the despair of those who treat all truth as matter of opinion, and tell you, in effect, that God has revealed nothing for man certainly to believe and know.

Pray, and God has heard. 'Before they call,' God says[z], 'I will answer.' 'I said,' says David[a], 'I will confess mine iniquities unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' God saw the purpose to confess, and, before it was done in act, He forgave. Whatever thy stage of faith or trial be, there begin. If thou hast not faith in prayer, ask God to give it thee. Think not, that it is to prejudge as to the efficacy of prayer, to pray. It is to prejudge, not to pray. If (which is impossible) prayer were a delusion, thou wouldest be but where thou wert, when thou hadst prayed. For there would be none to hear, or to give thee faith in it. But, apart even from God's Word, whom wouldest thou trust as to any bodily medicine, millions who had tried it, or those who had not tried it? So do as to the soul. No one, who tried prayer with an honest and true heart, failed to be heard. *They* only doubt its might

[z] Isa. lxv. 24. [a] Ps. xxxii. 5.

for good or misdoubt it, who have not tried or have disused it.

Only set thy will at one with the Will of God. If thy temptation be as to life, say to God, Thine All, '[b]Give what Thou commandest and command what Thou willest,' and pray. If it be as to faith, say, 'Lord, I believe whatsoever Thou hast revealed. Teach Thou me.' Couldest thou only say, 'If Thou hast revealed any certain truth, and teachest Thy creature man, teach me,' God would hear thee.

O that men knew the might, the majesty of prayer! They think it a small thing to bend the knee to an earthly sovereign, to ask some favour, or to one whom the soul deeply loves, to ask herself. Prayer to God asks for Himself, to be the soul's own. 'O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee.'

This is an office of prayer, beyond any thing or all, which, besides, it seeks and obtains. Prayer obtains grace, wisdom, strength, self-mastery, peace, all which the soul dares wish for, for time or eternity; but it obtains more; it gains God. Man cannot be God; he cannot, as the tempter taught him with that wondrous knowledge, wherewith he has tempted him ever since, be 'as God'; he cannot be a god unto himself; but he may be, he is more (so God says), '[c]a partaker of the Divine Nature.' No! This magnificent capacity of man's intellect, this comprehensive insatiable largeness of man's heart, was not made to fail just there, where is the sole adequate complement of its being. What to it is it, to grasp the laws

[b] St. Aug. Conf. x. 29. [c] 2 Pet. i. 4.

of the universe, the whole range of cause and effect, the mastering of inanimate nature, the decyphering (if so it were) of millions upon millions of years backwards; what were it to grasp all knowledge, and, with the conqueror of old, thirst for new worlds to conquer, if for itself, amid all this, nothing were found to fill it, an orphan in an '[d]orphan world'? The material, about which men are so busy, can never satisfy the immaterial soul. All nature is beneath it, because nature is material. Strange distortion of man's being, to seek its satisfaction in that which must needs be below it, instead of finding all which it would have, all knowledge, all wisdom, where it exists infinitely, in God! O glorious prerogative of the faith of the simple peasant, ignorant of this world's knowledge, but having access to Divine! O glorious compendium of Divine illumining, whereby, not as in a mirror nor by laborious process, the soul shall have all knowledge, and shall see the secret cause of all created things, in the light of God, in

[d] 'Reason, if it deserves the name, if it fulfils its mission, ought then, above all, to preside over the establishment of those relations between the soul and its Divine End, which are as glorious as they are necessary. Reason is set by its very nature over that eminent and regular order, which unites the ray to its focus, the thought of man with the thought of God, our love to His goodness, in a word, the creature to its Author.

'Without this, we shall have nothing before our eyes, or within ourselves, but that orphan world, the very hypothesis of which saddened the genius of Leibnitz, and disinherited in his estimation that philosophy, which does not seek, before all, the kingdom of God, His righteousness and His intimate alliance with the soul.' Ravignan, l. c. p. 582.

God! Even gifts of God could not satisfy that vast soul of man; no wisdom, no intelligence, nothing which has any bound or end.

Prayer fills this void, which all creation, out of God, could not fill. Prayer is 'the ascent of the soul to God'; it is the beginning of that blessed converse, which shall be the exhaustless fulness of eternal bliss; it is the continuance or renewal of union with God. The pleasure is but in the search; when it is attained, its interest is gone. O what a dry, cold, lifeless, heartless eternity it were, to have only an unspiritual knowledge of all creation, or all possible creations! What were there for the heart? Blessed dissatisfaction of man's craving soul; glorious restlessness, the token of its Divine birth, its Divine end; that nothing can satisfy it, except what is the bliss of its God, Infinite, Divine love. Imperfect, faltering, unsatisfactory as are our prayers, their defects but shew the more the goodness of our God, Who is never weary of those who are so soon wearied of Him, Who lets not fall a single earnest cry to Him for Himself. Not one prayer, from the yearning of the penitent, 'would, O God, for love of Thee, I had never offended Thee!' to the love-enkindled longing of the saint, 'My God, and my All!' but will have enlarged thy capacity for the Infinite love of God, and will have drawn down to thee the Indwelling of God the Holy Ghost, Who is Love Infinite, the Bond of the love of the Father and the Son. It will guard thee from all evil in the perilous passage through this world; it will sanctify to thee all thy joys; it will be to thee a calm

above nature in all thy sorrows; it will give a supernatural value to all thy acts; it will heal all thine infirmities; it will illumine all thy knowledge; and, when thy flesh and thy heart shall fail, thy last prayer upon earth in the Name of Jesus shall melt into thy first Hallelujah in heaven, where too doubtless prayer shall never cease, but the soul shall endlessly desire of God, what God shall unintermittingly supply, more and yet more of the exhaustless, everfilling fulness of Divine Beauty and Wisdom and Love, yea of Himself Who is Love.

SERMON XVII.

PROPHECY, A SERIES OF MIRACLES, WHICH WE CAN EXAMINE FOR OURSELVES.

2 St. Peter i. 18, 19.

'*This voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount; we have also a more sure word of prophecy,* (lit. "and we have yet firmer the prophetic word,") *whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.*'

It is plain that St. Peter is speaking of what he himself heard and saw, when he was with Jesus in the Mount, holy, in his memory, by the Transfiguration of his Lord. 'We did not,' he says, 'follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but having been admitted to be eye-witnesses of the mysteries of His Majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory,'—'honour,' in the voice which spake to Him; 'glory,' in the light which shone from Him;—'when such a voice was borne unto Him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; and this Voice we heard.' St. Peter then was, at this time of which he speaks,

witness to a two-fold miracle. He had seen the Divine Majesty of our Lord, transfiguring and illumining, with superhuman radiancy, the veil of His Flesh. He had heard a Divine Voice, a Voice which he knew to come from God the Father, proclaiming the Eternal Sonship of Jesus. These were eminent grounds of his own knowledge, that what he made known to them of the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ was no fable, but most certain truth. Absolute certainty can, of course, have no degrees. When we speak of 'moral certainty,' we mean something short of it, a certainty less than that of what we see with our eyes, or have proved to us by mathematics. What St. Peter made known to us, he had seen with his own eyes and had heard with his own ears. He joins himself in, (as is the Apostles' wont for love's sake,) with those to whom he writes, 'And we have yet firmer the word of prophecy.' He makes himself one with them, as all are one in Christ, although not to himself, but to those to whom he wrote and to us, there was something firmer than what *he* had so seen and heard, 'the Prophetic word.' 'He does not say better, or truer,' says St. Augustine[a], 'but more certain'; not more certain in itself, but more *reliable*, that, on which we could rest with greater confidence. He, the great Apostle to whom the 'keys of the kingdom of heaven' had first been given; he, on whose confession of Himself, God and Man, our Lord had said, 'I will build my Church'; he, with St. James and

[a] Serm. 43, n. 5.

St. John, the chosen witness of our Lord's glory above the other Apostles; he, by whose mouth the Holy Ghost spake, and at whose preaching Jews and Gentiles were first converted to the faith in Christ, tells us that there is something 'firmer' to us than his own spoken word, than his own witness of the miracles which he had seen with his own eyes,—'The Prophetic word.'

And this itself had, in one respect, only a temporary office: 'unto which,' he proceeds, 'ye do well that ye take heed,' apply your mind, 'as to a light,' or candle, 'shining in a dark,' a squalid, gloomy 'place, until day shall dawn,' flashing through and irradiating the darkness of the night, 'and the day-star shall rise in your hearts.'

The object of all was the kindling of the light of faith in the soul. St. Peter is not speaking of light in the world to come, of light, such as that will be, of which the Psalmist speaks, '[b]In Thy light shall we see light,' the light of the beatific vision, when we shall '[c]see God, as He is,' 'face to face,' and '[d]shall know, even as we are known.' St. Peter is comparing two states of man in this life, not this life with the world to come. The Christian's life is not described as that dreary path, which men would make it, in which he is to grope his way, doubting, unsteady, stumbling. 'Darkness[e],' the Apostle says, 'is past, and the true light now shineth.' '[f]Ye were sometimes darkness,' says St. Paul,

[b] Ps. xxxvi. 9. [c] 1 John iii. 2. [d] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.
[e] 1 John ii. 8. [f] Eph. v. 8.

'but now are ye light in the Lord.' '[g]Ye are all the children of the light, the children of the day.' '[h]God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' And St. Peter himself had said, '[i]that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.' Here too, he says not merely, 'until day dawn,' but, 'until the day-star arise in your hearts.' The heart is the seat of this exceeding light, of which he speaks. And the dawn of that light is an end in itself. There is, so far, nothing beyond it in this life, nothing left but to retain it. Before there was 'a lamp' to watch, to follow, to take heed to; a light without us, as St. John Baptist '[k]was a burning and shining light,' to guide men to Christ; but still without us, not within us, enough to guide us, but '[l]amid encircling gloom.' And then, in contrast with this gloom, we have the bright effulgence of the day, '[m]Day creative of the day' within; Christ shining on the soul, 'making thought and sense Divine;' and all is light.

[g] 1 Thess. v. 5. [h] 2 Cor. iv. 6. [i] 1 Pet. ii. 9.
[k] St. John v. 35. [l] Lyra Apostolica.

[m] 'Of the Father Effluence bright,
Out of Light evolving light,
Light of light, unfailing Ray,
Day creative of the day;
Truest Sun, upon us flow,
With Thy calm perpetual glow,
In the Spirit's still sunshine
Making thought and sense Divine.'

Dr. Newman's translation of the hymn 'Splendor Paternæ gloriæ.'

This is not the order which some of us would have expected. Miracles of Divine power are more startling, more instantaneous in their operation, than the miracle of Divine knowledge. They flash upon us; they awe, they bespeak the Presence of God. As we throw ourselves back among those who witnessed them, we feel ourselves in the Presence of an invisible awful Power, mighty alike to save or to destroy; nay, not in His Presence only, but in His Hands, to do with us as He Wills. Fear is probably almost inseparable from every manifestation of Divine power. For we are guilty creatures, and He is our God. Hence great fear followed, at times, even upon our Lord's miracles of love[n]. And since awe of God awakens the soul and drives it to God, therefore perhaps has He chosen for His immediate and first manifestation of Himself, miracles of Divine power, which are also miracles of love.

Yet miracles, not seen by us, but coming to us by report, so far as they are only miracles, appeal less directly to us. Those indeed which are bound up with the Person of our Lord and His truth, such as the miracle of His Resurrection, are not miracles only. We are not then in the region of mere evidence. They are filled with His light and truth. They speak to us directly of Him, and He speaks to us in them. Jesus speaks to us in His acts as in His words; and the heart which loves knows His Voice in both, as the hearts of the disciples burned in them, when He spake to them by the way[o]. The Resurrection of

[n] St. Mark iv. 41; v. 15, 33; St. Luke v. 8, 10; viii. 25.
[o] St. Luke xxiv. 32.

our Lord is at once the fulfilment of prophecy in the Old Testament and of His own, the declaration of His Eternal Sonship, the seal of His Ministry, the glorifying of His Humanity, the assurance of our justification, the earnest to us of our eternal life, the cause of our resurrection.

But the miracles, which have not that overpowering evidence, which have not that central place in the Gospel, do not appeal so directly to us as the grounds of our faith. For the most part, I think, we believe those other miracles, because we believe the Gospel, not, the Gospel because we believe those miracles. 'The voice from heaven,' says St. Augustine[p], 'whereby the believing may be admonished; the prophetic word, whereby the unbelieving may be convinced.'

Mark well the thoughtful father's careful distinction. He does not say that the office, nay, not even that the force of evidence, of such miracles has ceased. Not their evidence, but their place, as evidence, is changed. It may be that miracles are, by a higher law of God, the necessary accompaniment of that Presence with His creatures, wherein He reveals Himself. His supernatural laws have, of course, their own order and harmony, just as much as those natural laws, which men so idolise, because they serve, and do not interfere with, themselves. For what men call 'laws of nature' are, to those who truly believe in God, laws, not *of* but *on* nature; ways,—it may be uniform ways, —of the working of the Creator. And His supernatural

[p] Serm. 43, n. 5.

ways of working, flowing forth, as they must, from His own Being, must have the same reason for them, and must have their groundwork in that same Divine Wisdom, uniform amid its apparent multiformity, as His workings in nature. As to those natural workings also, we believe that He acts by an uniform Wisdom, even when we know not either the nature or the objects of His creation, nor can trace its regularity. It is a great principle of modern science, that all things, which seem most exempt from known law, obey some unknown rule;—in Christian language, the Will of their Creator. Men believe this of those heavenly visitants[q], which passing from space beyond all thought to other boundless space, each around a

[q] Prof. Donkin has kindly furnished me with the following statement as to comets.

'About three or four comets on the average are seen every year. Their paths, in the great majority of cases, cannot be distinguished from *parabolas*; or, to speak more accurately, that part of the path which we can trace by observation, is too short to enable us to distinguish it from part of a parabolic path.

'That the path of any comet is *exactly* parabolic, is not likely. For if it were so, the smallest perturbation (from the attraction of other bodies than the sun) would change it into a path either slightly elliptic or slightly hyperbolic.

'A slightly elliptic path (i. e. a very elongated ellipse) would belong to a comet of very long period. A path ever so slightly hyperbolic would belong to a comet which could not visit the sun again unless its path were altered. An exactly parabolic path might be considered as an infinitely elongated ellipse, and would belong to a comet of *infinite* period, which is the same thing as saying that it would never return.

'Out of several hundred (I think about 300, but I am not sure of the number) registered comets, it is said that about forty have appeared to have distinctly elliptic orbits, and out of these forty, four are absolutely known to be elliptic (in other words periodic) because they have

centre of its own, at a distance scarce distinguishable from infinity, just flash for a few days or weeks upon our sight, and then retire, to be seen no more, while this our earth shall last, instruments of unknown ends in space unknown.

So also, when we rise above this material world to our spiritual being, and believe that we stand in relation to God Who made us, we must believe that all things which appertain to that relation, even those heavenly visitants, the miracles of His power and love, are ordered by His laws; only by laws, finer, more delicate, less cognisable by us, because the soul and its operations are finer and less calculable, spirit and the workings of free-will are more delicate and more subtle far, than the finest combinations of what is simply material. God has Himself, in many respects, revealed to us rules of that His supernatural way of working. Thoughtful men, conversant with man's spiritual life, and observant of God's dealings with man, have seen manifold laws of God in His Divine work with the souls of men. True, there is one power at work there, the most inscrutable of all, baffling

been seen more than once. It is also said that about seven have shewn traces more or less decided of a hyperbolic path.

'Of the rest we can only say that, if they are periodic, their period is very long.

'Of the constitution of comets we know next to nothing. It appears certain that their *masses* are very small. (It has even been thought that some of them do not weigh more than a few ounces.) And it is highly probable that no part of them is solid.

'I do not think I ever saw so much as a plausible conjecture as to the use of comets. I am quite certain that I never saw one worth remembering.'

all calculation, dispensing with all law, superseding, as far as we know, all even Divine rules, the superabundant, resourceful, almost exhaustless, prodigality of Infinite Love. But as, in things of nature and this material world, we are solidly assured, from the known harmony of things, whereof God has disclosed the laws to us, that those things also, whereof we discern not the rules or the end, are regulated by that same Infinite Wisdom which ordered the things we know;—so, since spiritual things are, so far as man can discern, guided and governed by Divine laws, we should be equally certain that those things which seem or which are exceptional, those occasioning radiations of Divine Wisdom and Love, have their rule also. It may be one of those supernatural laws, that God discloses by words of power His special Presence with His creatures. It may be unfitting, that it should be otherwise. Miracles are flashes, as it were, from His unseen glory; coruscations from '[r]the light which no man hath seen or can see.' As Jesus said, '[s]my words shall not pass away,' so neither do His works. Both are instinct with His Divinity. His Deity shines through His works, as through His words. They have their force still on the believer's soul. They are not mere moral lessons, ways of His acting, part of the array of His beneficence and of His love. Since they have been, they are inseparable from Himself. God, if He had not wrought them for us, would have been to us other than He is.

[r] 1 Tim. vi. 16. [s] St. Matt. xxiv. 35.

It is not, then, in disparagement of God's past miracles, even as to us who have not seen them, that St. Peter says that the 'word of prophecy' is firmer to us. It is part of the condescension of our God towards us. The miracles we did not see. Prophecy is a miracle which, if we will, our own eyes may see, our hands may handle; it passes not away, but abides with us; it patiently awaits our searching. It requires, not learning, but simplicity. It invites us to survey it, as a whole. Unanalysed, unreflected on, it sweeps over the attuned soul, and transports it with its heavenly harmony. It offers itself for us, if we will, to dissect it, line by line, and word by word. It lets us scrutinise, compare, weigh, analyse it. It bears even with man's dishonesty. They may lop and hew its limbs, if they dare; they may dislocate it, as they did Him, its Author, of Whom it speaks, when, on the Cross, '[t]all His bones were out of joint.' They may bear false witness against it, as men did against Himself, that these or those prophetic words had not their fulfilment. Distort, misrepresent, explain away, misinterpret details, as they will, they cannot reach its life and its Divinity. It survives and triumphs still. Its guardians and witnesses have been, and are, the deadliest enemies and blasphemers of Christ and of His Gospel. Embalmed by a superhuman faith for that spiritual resurrection, the conversion which St. Paul prophesies at the end[u], the Jewish nation is preserved in that living death, keepers and authenticators of that Holy Writ, which

[t] Ps. xxii. 14. [u] Rom. xi. 26.

foretells of Him Whom they look for as to come, Whom they reject as come. 'The elder,' says St. Augustine[x], 'serves the younger; they are, as it were, our servants to bear the volumes for us, which we study. With them are the law and the prophets, in which law and in which prophets Christ is preached. When we deal with the Heathen, and shew that *that* now cometh to pass in the Church of Christ, which was foretold of the Name of Christ, of the Head and of the Body of Christ, lest they should think that we feigned those predictions, and, from the things which have happened, have written of them as yet to be, we produce the volumes of the Jews. The Jews are our enemies; out of an enemy's volumes the adversary is convicted. The Lord then hath distributed all things, ordered all things, for our salvation. He foretold things, ere we were; He hath fulfilled them in this our time; and what He hath not yet fulfilled, He will fulfil hereafter!' The enemies of Christ attest that it was written; we see with our own eyes, that it is fulfilled.

'Because we were not there, and did not then hear that voice from heaven,' says St. Augustine[y], 'Peter himself saith to us, "And we have more sure the prophetic word." For our Lord Jesus Christ, foreseeing that there would be some ungodly men, who would blaspheme His miracles, ascribing them to magical arts, sent the prophets before Him. If He was a magician, and by magical arts effected, that,

[x] In Ps. xl. n. 14.

[y] In St. Joann. Ev. Tract. 35, n. 8, p. 498. Oxf. Tr.

though dead, He should be worshipped, was He a magician, before He was born?' '[z] The prophets *were*, not only before that voice was uttered, but before Christ took our flesh. Christ was not yet man, when He sent the prophets.'

Calumnies pass away; man's natural repugnance to Divine truth, his capacity and need of God, his restlessness and unhappiness apart from God, abide. No one would now take up with the blasphemy of magical arts; not, because men, without grace, believe more, but because they believe less. They rebel against miracles, because they have not seen them. They see that God upholds all natural things in the beautiful order which He has impressed and impresses upon them; and they have *not* seen the operations of that higher law of His love, whereby, through miracles of power, He makes His Presence felt by His creatures—a law as much above those beautiful physical laws, as spirit is above matter, eternity above time, the harmony and union of His intelligent creation with Himself above the mere outward, although lovely, harmony of His material creation. And so, what man sees not, he believes not. And God compassionates the creature which He made, complies with its waywardness, and gives it what it asks.

Prophecy infringes no law; nay, prophecy was the law of God during all those centuries before Christ came. Each era was marked by prophecy. The fulfilment of the nearer prophecies was ever the

[z] Serm. 43, n. 5.

pledge of the more remote. No insulated words, no uncertain anticipations, no ambiguous utterances, no chance coincidences, no calculable connection of causes with their events, but, clear, distinct, accumulating, the tide of prophecy rolled on, dependent for its fulfilment on man's free agency and conflicting wills; temporal prophecy the continuous witness of God's Providence, and the earnest of the spiritual to come; spiritual prophecy centring in Him Who is the Centre of the world, 'knitting together things visible and invisible,' 'things in heaven and things on earth.'

And now too, after prophecy has rested in Him, He does not ask us to believe simply on the evidence of others. Miracles are sensible stupendous facts, foreseen and foreordained of God, but contrary to the wonted order of His Providence, and different from the laws which He has ordinarily assigned to nature. But each miracle is a single fact; it is seen; it is past. Prophecy, on the contrary, is the blending and harmony of two orders of facts, separated mostly by some marked interval of time, so that the fact of the prediction is patent and notorious, the fact of its fulfilment can be judged of, seen, known by the powers which God has given to ourselves. We were not present when the miracles were wrought; the fulfilment of prophecies is present with us.

'The faithful,' says St. Augustine[a], 'who were in those times in the land of Judæa, were present at, and

[a] De fide rerum quæ non videntur, n. 7. St. Aug. Short Treatises, pp. 8–10. Oxf. Tr.

learnt, as present, Christ's wonderful Birth of a Virgin, and His Passion, Resurrection, Ascension; all His Divine words and deeds. These things ye have not seen, and therefore ye refuse to believe. Therefore behold these things, which are not told you as things past, nor foretold you as things future, but are shewn you as things present. Seemeth it to you to be none or a little Divine miracle, that the whole world followeth One Crucified? Ye saw not what was foretold and fulfilled in the Human Birth of Christ, "[b] Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son," but you see the word foretold and fulfilled unto Abraham; "[c] In thy seed shall all nations be blessed." Ye saw not what was foretold of the wonderful works of Christ; but ye see that which was foretold. "[d] The Lord said unto Me, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me and I will give Thee the Heathen for Thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Thy possession." Ye saw not what was foretold and fulfilled concerning the Passion of Christ; "[e] They pierced My hands and My feet: all My bones were out of joint, they gazed and stared upon Me; they divided My raiment among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." But ye see that which was in the same Psalm foretold and is now clearly fulfilled; "[f] All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him." Ye saw not what was foretold and fulfilled concerning the Resurrection of

[b] Is. vii. 14. [c] Gen. xxvi. 4. [d] Ps. ii. 7.
[e] Ps. xxii. 14, 16, 17, 18. [f] Ps. xxii. 27.

Christ;—but ye see His Church, of which it is written, "[g] O Lord, my God, the nations shall come to Thee from the ends of the earth." Ye saw not what was foretold and fulfilled concerning the Ascension of Christ, "[h] Be Thou exalted above the heavens, O God;" but ye see what immediately follows, "And above all the earth Thy glory." Those things concerning Christ already done and past, all of them ye have not seen; but these things present in His Church, ye deny not that ye see.'

St. Augustine had before him the extreme case of a fanatic sect which refused to believe what they did not actually see with their bodily eyes. They could not deny that it had been foretold that men of all nations should be converted to God Whom the Jews alone worshipped, (the Scriptures, to which the Jews, the enemies of Christians bare witness, are full of this;) nor, that they *were* converted, (they saw it;) nor that God alone, in Whose hands are human wills, could foreknow it or bring it to pass. The principle extends much further. At least, the natural facts of history are not disputed now. These then too accumulate this evidence of Prophecy. The principle applies to all prophecy, of which we can know certainly, that such an interval passed between the prophecy and the event, and such was the nature of the things predicted, that the acutest human intelligence could not foresee them, nor human power bring them to pass. And it is just this accumulation of prophecy, to which St. Peter directs us. He speaks not of the

[g] Jer. xvi. 19. [h] Ps. cviii. 5.

one or other prophecy, however great, but of the whole, 'the prophetic word.' He includes both the prophecies concerning our Lord and His Church, and our Lord's own predictions; for these were, when he wrote, not known only, but written. In both ways Divine prophecy differs from acute human anticipation. Human anticipation is a knowledge of things out of their causes, which causes are known already to the human mind. Divine prophecy springs from Divine knowledge of things as they are in themselves. Human anticipations have been insulated convictions as to single events, discernible beforehand by human sagacity. They have been very rare in the whole range of the history of man, man's conscience or his dread of failure withholding him from predicting certainly, what, as man, he does not certainly know. Even the very few, which seem at first sight plausible, will not stand the tests to which Divine prophecy has been subjected[1]. Divine prophecy embraces not single events only, but those, like the sidereal system, in harmony with, and bearing on one another; not as to things according to experience, but against experience. When men have denied the Birth of a Virgin or the Resurrection, they cannot yet deny the Death of Jesus. Deny then what men will, there remain those great, yet fulfilled, paradoxes of prophecy, that the Messiah should be cut off, yet should be worshipped and should reign for ever; that a remnant only of His own people should receive Him,

[1] On the instances alleged by Dr. Stanley in his Jewish Church, see Note F on Daniel the Prophet, by the writer, pp. 619–27.

but that we, the Gentiles, should flock to Him from the ends of the earth. No one doubts that the books, which foreannounced these things, were written before Christ came. We ourselves see and know that the Crucified is adored from pole to pole, from the rising to the setting sun. But on this, if it please God, I would speak to you at length hereafter. *Now*, I would only point out to you the principle of this loving provision of our God, how He meets our wish to have a miracle which our own eyes may see, our own hands may handle.

But powerful and persuasive as is the prophetic word, it is not, by itself, all-sufficient. It is a lamp amid the gloom of ignorance or doubt, to guide us to Christ. It is not the effulgent, irradiating, sun. It prepares for faith: man, by taking heed to it, studying it, following it, prepares himself, by God's grace, for faith; but it does not give faith. Why? Because there is a great chasm between seeing that a thing is to be believed, and, if it is a Divine truth, believing it. Man, of himself, cannot span it, nor bridge it over. To see that it is to be believed, belongs to the understanding; to believe, belongs to the will, but to the will, moved by grace of God to hold that which the understanding enlightened by Him apprehends. God, throughout the whole restoration of man, employs means to draw him to Himself, but leaves man in possession of his own free will. To man's understanding God gives manifold grounds—miracles, prophecy, the inherent might of Christianity, its superhuman growth, its correspondence to our

needs, its supernatural life; above all, the Person of our Redeemer, giving life and power and persuasiveness to miracle and prophecy. To man's will God offers all that persuasiveness of hopes and fears, that stern uncompromising peremptory voice of conscience, that restless longing to be free from sin's burden, that thirst to be at one with God, inextinguishable except by the soul's death, the soul's need of God, and God's corresponding provisions for the soul. By these things God draws the intellect and the will within the sphere of His overpowering grace; but the last crowning act, whereby the soul believes what He has revealed, and through justifying faith is reconciled to God, is of the grace of God. Why? Because faith is supernatural. The means must be proportioned to the end. Man was created for a supernatural end, and in a supernatural condition, 'a state of grace;' fallen by sin, he is raised, restored, renewed supernaturally in Christ Jesus for the same end; he receives supernatural grace, light, strength, to attain his last and true end, the intuitive and supernatural vision of God. God has not so divided His work with man, that the beginning should be with man, which God should build up and expand. The natural is not the threshold and vestibule and key to the supernatural. We are not to be Pelagians to the threshold of the Gospel; believers in Divine grace, when we have entered it. Unassisted human reason was not to be the self-sufficing creator of Divine Faith. It is unreasonable, unharmonious, self-contradictory. The natural pairs well with the natural; it is the parent of the natural;

the spiritual, of the spiritual; the supernatural, of the supernatural. The stream does not rise above its source. Natural reasoning is the parent of natural knowledge: supernatural illumining is the parent of supernatural knowledge. Human reason is the recipient, not the author of Divine faith; as the body is the receptacle of the soul, and soul and body become the dwelling-place of God. But as our spiritual, supernatural, life is not *of* us, but given to us; so neither is that supernatural faith, which is the beginning and first entrance into our supernatural life. God employs our natural qualities, which He has given us, to predispose us, yet always with His grace, for the reception of grace. '[k] We are not able of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves but our sufficiency is of God.' So God employs our reason to dispose us, under His guiding grace, to the reception of faith; but faith itself we receive; our reason does not create it.

We have doubtless, most of us, been startled by those emphatic words, '[l] No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost;' and this, as the counterpart and correlative of that, which is to a Christian, a self-evident truth, '[m] I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed.' What? This belief, which is part of ourselves, which we cannot imagine ourselves not believing, which is to us as simple as the air we breathe, as the light which we see, which to deny would, (we know,) be horrible ingratitude and spiritual death; this, the first simple confession of our

[k] 2 Cor. iii. 5. [l] 1 Cor. xii. 3. [m] Ibid.

childish faith; this, which the sublime simplicity of peasant faith holds unwavering and certain; this, which lives on with us to grey hairs, unchanging while all around us changes, undecaying while we ourselves decay; this, the last breath of the departing soul, when the body is all but dissolved, the confession which the eye speaks when the tongue is powerless to utter it; is this, which we utter in every prayer, which we think in every thought of God; this, our strength in temptation, our joy and brightness in the thought of things eternal, our comfort in affliction, our stay in the consciousness of our sins—that 'Jesus,' our Redeemer, is 'the Lord'; is this, which is so uniformly present with us, when we are not absent from ourselves in thoughts of sense or time, so the gift of God, that we are powerless to say *it*, which we are powerless not to say, but by the Holy Ghost? If so, it implies, plainly, an awful presence of God the Holy Ghost in all our good true thoughts of God. But it is true, because God has said it. Even because it *is* so uniform, so essential, so unfailing, so, when once received, a part of ourselves, is *it*, the basis of our spiritual life, given to us, sustained in us by God. St. Paul's was no abstract declaration, no mere statement of the power of grace: it was the description of the life and death of the whole world around Him. To 'pronounce Jesus, anathema,' was (as it is) the miserable delight of the Jew; it was a test, which the Heathen employed to assure themselves of the apostacy of those, once Christians: to call Him Lord, was, in the face of the unbelieving, persecuting, world, to own Him,

Who for our redemption hung upon the tree, to be Very and Eternal God. This, he says, whoever doth, he doth it through the illumining of that Omnipresent Spirit, Who, the Teacher of every human heart, enables each soul throughout the world by supernatural light to believe and know supernatural truth.

Sad, miserable independence were it, to be independent of our God, the Fountain of all good: the finite to be independent of the Infinite, and so, to be shut out from participation of It! Miserable, but degrading too to man's dignity, is this strife around us, which would dispute with God the right, Himself to help us, to enlighten us, to instruct us infallibly by His word; Himself, the Eternal Truth, to guide us unerringly into that supernatural Truth, which is from Him.

Greater far, if men knew it, is man's true dignity, to be admitted to be a fellow-worker with God in his salvation, as was said of old, '[n] God made thee without thee; He doth not justify thee without thee,' '[o] Not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.' Not God without man, nor man by his mere natural powers without God, but God, as the Author and Finisher, man, as the free, intelligent, consenting, recipient of the grace of God. 'The grace of God,' but 'with me.' God consults for our dignity, in making our acceptance of Himself, of His Light, His knowledge, His grace, yea our final participation of Himself, dependent upon the free-will, with which, in creating us, He endowed us. But infinitely above that dignity of nature

[n] St. Aug. Serm. 169. n. 13. See Pref. to Parochial Sermons, p. xiii.

[o] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

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is the dignity of grace, whereby we have, not human only, but Divine light, Divine strength, Divine power of love, through His Spirit which dwelleth in us.

This it is, which the Apostle says, 'until day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.' He says not, 'ye do well to take heed to it, until, by studying the prophetic word like any other book[p],' (although would God, in some sense, men did even this!) 'ye come by your natural reason to know, that Jesus is the Son of God.' He says, 'until day dawn,' until a full irradiating light burst from above upon your darkness, and fill you with the full, glad, certain light of day. It is a light which comes from above, but *then* is imparted to the soul. It is a light, not itself a private and independent revelation of God, apart from or overriding or even contradicting the revelation of His word, or the faith transmitted to the Church; (which has been the error of false mysticism, and which has made some afraid of the true doctrine of God's inwardly illumining light;) but a light enabling the soul to see, with a Divine certainty, that which God has certainly revealed. In modern language, it is a light, making *that* subjectively certain to the individual soul, which is already *objectively* certain through the known and attested revelation of God.

[p] 'Interpret the Scripture like any other book.' (Essays and Reviews, p. 377.) This is the last thing which rationalism has done. Any critic, who would so *mis*interpret any other book, as rationalists have the Hebrew Scriptures, would have been a laughingstock. But rationalist readers wished rationalist interpreters to explain away their meaning; and so received any false coin with both hands. 'Any darkness, so that we be not forced to admit of light from God!' was the desire of both.

This faith is immoveable, because it is of God. It 'knows in Whom it has believed.' It needs no fresh demonstrations. It is a light unshadowed by clouds. It sees, by the light of faith, what it believes. It is as certain, as if it saw them. It sorrows for, it prays for, those tossed on the waves of a sea of doubt, but itself is in perfect peace. '[q]Thou wilt keep, O Lord, in perfect peace, the soul which is stayed on Thee; because it is rested on Thee.' It lives in the bosom of peace and light, for its life is from God, in God, in grateful adoration of Him Who gave and Who preserved it.

My brethren, what the Apostle, yea what God by the Apostle, said to those assailed by Gnostic cavils, *that*, if ye are harassed by the unbelief floating around you, He says to you. Those of us, whose belief, by God's mercy, has never been moved, have, of His undeserved goodness, (blessed be God!) that Day-spring in our hearts. Faith, which God has given and preserved, is stronger than any proof. For it is maintained by *His* Omnipotence, Who gave it, by the indwelling of God, as the Apostle saith, '[r]strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to *know* the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.' His gift is not, to think or hold Divine truth as probable; it is not, to have opinions or views of things, of which one is as uncertain as other; it is, to *know*.

[q] Is. xxvi. 3. [r] Eph. iii. 16–19.

Man cannot give faith; man cannot demonstrate faith into the soul; he can but meet argument by argument, and little comes of it. 'Rarely, very rarely,' said one of much experience, 'have reasonings or discussions subdued or brought back wandering hearts.' The Prophetic word is powerful, more powerful than any exposition of it; for it is the Word of God; it breathes with the Spirit of God; it burns with the love of God. It will lead you, for God will lead you through it. Only give up your whole heart to Him Who made you in His Love. Say to Him, 'My God, I believe, with my will, whatsoever Thou hast revealed. For Thou art the Truth. Thou canst not deceive, nor be deceived:' and pray to Him.

I knew the inmost heart and mind of one of the clearest intellects of my day, who, in his youth, was beset by the difficulties of a more powerful philosophy than any of these things which are circulating among you, and who thought it impossible that he could ever again believe a miracle. By God's mercy, in order not to pain his parents, he entered a church, and there heard again some of the narratives of our Redeemer's life. It flashed upon him, 'but for the miracles, this sounds like true history.' So he prayed to God the sceptic prayer, that 'if He concerned Himself about His creatures, He would hear him.' God heard the prayer, the best which, in that state of unbelief, His creature could make, and, through the study of the prophetic word, led him to acknowledge the miracle of Divine wisdom in prophecy, and so gave to him the light of faith.

Only seek with thy whole heart, without reserve, without withholding any thing. '[8]Unless wisdom and truth be sought with the whole power of the mind,' says St. Augustine, who had sought and found, 'they cannot be found. But sought as is meet, truth cannot withdraw and hide herself from those who love her.—"Ask," He saith, "and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "There is nothing hid, which shall not be revealed." Through love, we ask; through love, we seek; through love, we knock; through love, it is revealed unto us; through love do we abide in that which is revealed.'

A few years at most, and all of us will behold God, and see the truth of those things which men here dispute, and the reality of that which men here deny, and the reasonableness and reasons of that which men declare unreasonable, and the righteousness of that which His creatures venture to denounce as contrary to His attributes and revolting to their 'moral sense'! Glorious, beatific, exhaustless, yea, in all eternity enlarged in its bliss, will be that vision of our God, which only by His supernatural gift, the light of glory, His highest creature can behold; God, in the Infinity of All-Holy Wisdom, All-Glorious Majesty, Universality of Good, Perfection of Beauty and Love, as He Is, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and all *that* Good, ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. This, if we believe, is ours in earnest already; this is the All-Merciful Will of our God towards us, if we, with our whole souls, choose His All-Wise Will. But it may

[8] De morib. Eccl. Cath. c. 17, n. 31, T. i. p. 699.

be missed. It is hourly missed. These things, about which God's creatures dispute so freely, are not matters of keen intellectual subtlety, or trial of skill, or practice of acuteness, or exercise of greater boldness than our fellow-men venture upon; they are matters of certain truth, which God has infallibly revealed, and, in rejecting which truth, men reject God. If men, through their own fault, reject Him, (of which not they, but He, the Searcher of hearts, is the judge,) they are matters of life and death, of life and death eternal, of that everliving life in God in Heaven, of that deathless death, apart from Him, in an everlasting loss of God in Hell. It is Jesus, Who died for us, Who so loved us as to die for us, Who, in His love, said it, that we might not die eternally; '[t] He that believeth not shall be damned.' May He Who said, '[u] I am the way, the truth, and the life,' guide us all by His Spirit into His truth, and be to us Himself the Way unto Himself the Life.

[t] St. Mark xvi. 16. [u] St. John xiv. 6.

SERMON XVIII.[a]

TRUE PEACE AND FALSE PEACE.

St. John xx. 21.

'Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you.'

All crave for peace. People engage in that which is most opposite to peace, war, for the sake of peace. All at least, except those in a savage state, or those savages in the midst of civilization, conquerors. So necessary is peace to the human mind, that if men have not the true peace and are not minded to have it, they make themselves a false peace. You have doubtless, many of you, doubted at times, 'Have I that peace which Jesus promised?' In some sudden pause amid the day's turmoil, in some moment of solitude, the sudden thought has come, 'How is it between me and my God?' Perhaps the soul turned away from the thought, or dismissed it with Felix's answer '[b] When I have a more convenient season, I will call for thee.' Yet, probably, in God's mercy, it has come again. One, who often asked what seemed

[a] Preached in the College Service, Low Sunday, 1877.

[b] Acts xxiv. 25.

an intrusive question if the heart was to answer him not itself, 'Have you peace?' awakened misgivings in souls, which knew not what to answer. And the question drove the soul within itself to ask itself, 'Is the state, in which I pass day by day, a true peace or a false?' True peace is, when the soul revolves round its centre, Almighty God, itself at one with itself, craving for nothing but what God continually supplies, its passions subdued to itself, itself lovingly loyal to God, in harmony with its God and His laws. There is only one other peace. God preserve you from it! It would be (if it were possible) to have rooted out or stupefied or drugged or numbed or paralysed the thought of God, of a life to come, of a retribution hereafter: to be *quite certain* that we are like the beasts that perish; to be under the dominion of '[c] the strong man armed,' Satan, who 'keepeth his palace, and his goods are in peace:' to be so blinded, that no ray of light can enter the sightless eyes; so stone-deaf, that no sound of truth can pierce the heavy ear: the heart so dulled that it cannot understand or have one heart-ache for itself or the ruin which it has made of itself. '[d] As perfect charity,' says a holy writer, 'casts out fear, so iniquity consummated gives security.' For since all peace, out of God, is false, it cannot be undisturbed, so long as there is any room for doubt, that there *may be* a God, a hereafter. For if there be another stage of being, conscience, until absolutely deadened, will surmise that it *may be* well or ill with it there,

[c] St. Luke xi. 21. [d] St. Bern. 1 St. John iv. 18.

according to its doings here. The thought of God brings with it the thought of a Judge.

In the dimmest Heathen belief of a future, there has been the belief of a judgement in the realms below. 'Now there is no escape, no resistance,' said a heathen Atheist[e], 'since we have to fear eternal punishment in death.' Between these two, perfect peace in God, and the peace of the silence of death under Satan, there are countless stages, as each class is approaching to the one term or the other. Men try to make to themselves a false peace: God gives the true. Satan can invent refined ways of false peace for the refined, or coarse for the coarse sensualist. Men can afford to despise coarse ways of procuring a false peace or stupefaction, through ways to which they are not inclined, excess of riot, or gross sensuality, slavery to their passions, or those things against which God warns us, alike in Lent and Easter, '[f] uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence.' A man may abstain from steeping and drowning his conscience in such things, if not specially tempted thereto, and yet be as much a victim of false peace, as those whom he despises. Nay he may be the blinder of the two. The Pharisee was blinder, more hopelessly blind, than those whom he thanked God that he did not resemble.

God made the soul for Himself, to have its bliss in His Infinite Unchanging Exhaustless Love. The soul then 'must needs be restless, until it repose in Him.' Everything, whether it belongs to the keenest

[e] Lucret. de rer. nat. i. 111.

[f] Col. iii. 5.

intellect, or the lowest senses, is an idol if the soul rests in it, apart from its God. The soul's craving for peace is its natural yearning for its End, its Maker and its God. Through this longing for peace, God would, as by a magnet, draw it to Himself. But so long as it knows not that its peace can only be found by cleaving stedfastly to God, by giving itself to Him and adhering inseparably to Him, it must take up with some of His creatures, instead of Himself. But *there* is the necessary void, that since the soul is large enough to contain the Infinite God, nothing less than Himself can satisfy or fill it.

It knows too from God's Word, that it was made to have God for its Friend, the Object of its being; that it owes Him a loyal obedience, the affections of its heart. If it is a Christian soul, it knows that its God took flesh, became Man, was born, suffered, died, rose again for love of *it*; died, as we say now, 'to destroy death, and rose again to restore to us everlasting life;' that He gave His Spirit to unite us as closely as He could to Himself. How can it know this and remain apart from God and not have an aching void, or be at peace?

Then, by a necessity of its nature, it must make itself a false peace, or at least a truce. It has no peace now, but it is confident that it will have it bye and bye. It cannot have peace and abide in its sins, but bye and bye it will part with its sins; or its sins, it hopes, will part with it; temptation will not, or is not to have such power as now. It matters not how. Somehow, without effort, without self-sacrifice, without

victory, without repentance, without love, without devotion, cold as it is, and not even hoping to be kindled by the fire of God's love, it is, in some way, to turn to God, and all is to be right.

So it makes a truce with its creditors: they are not to be hard upon it, or exacting, but to give it time, and all is to be right.

Or it will strike a balance with itself, and set so much natural good against so much evil, of which it is dimly conscious, as the Pharisee did. It does not commit the sins, to which it is not, by natural temperament, inclined. It lives in lawful marriage, and is not (as the Pharisee said) an adulterer: it lives like Dives, at ease, and is not covetous; it is naturally straightforward, and so is not unjust; or it gives of its superfluities, and pays its rates exactly. And yet the Pharisee, amid his thanksgivings to God for his virtues as the gift of God, went to his house unjustified. He was in a false peace. There is perhaps no such fertile seedplot of false peace, as men's natural graces or good dispositions. Men have them ever before their faces, and their sins behind their backs. They contemplate the graces which they think they have, and the sins which they think they have not, and leave out of sight the sins which they have, and the graces which they have not. They dare not indeed call natural love of activity zeal for God, or natural good nature, Divine love, such as that wherewith Christ has loved us. But activity for good or natural kindliness pass current with the world; why should they not with themselves and with their Judge?

And yet, if we look at God's word, how much of all this and more is false peace! True peace is that which lasts for ever. They who do their works to be seen of men (and in subtle ways very many more do so, than see that they are doing it), these are praised of men, if they be popular works; men think well of them; why should they not of themselves? But it is a false peace: for our Lord says, '[g] they have their reward,' wholly, all which will come to them, and so they have none in store for them in Heaven.

They who build wood, hay, stubble, even on the One Foundation which is Christ, although saved as by fire, in the mercy of God, still have a false peace: all their lives long they build with great labour, what shall be burned up in the great Day.

The foolish virgins had begun well; they went forth to meet the Bridegroom: they had been at pains to get themselves lamps: they had even lighted them once; they *had* had oil in them; they had waited for the Bridegroom; at last, while He tarried, they became tired of waiting: they did not persevere, but they were not disquieted: they slumbered: while they slumbered, their lamps were gone out. They had been in peace; but when the Bridegroom came, it was too late. They cried, '[h] Lord, Lord, open unto us;' but the door was shut, and there came forth from within that terrible voice, 'Verily I say unto you, I know ye not' The door never opened.

All those who shall appeal to our Lord, '[i] Lord,

[g] St. Matt. vi. 2. [h] Ib. xxv. 11, 12.
[i] Ib. vii. 22, 23.

Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works,' yet have not been careful to do the will of the Father, will have had a false peace. For He says, 'I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.'

The slothful servant had a false peace; for he came boldly to his Lord, and said, '[k] See; Thou hast, *that* is Thine.' He had kept, as he thought, his Lord's talent safe, he paraded it; he made no doubt that he had done well with it. Perhaps he had misgivings at times, when he saw the zeal and diligence of others; yet any how he had stifled such misgivings. He had satisfied his conscience, up to the hour of death, when his Lord came to take account of his stewardship. As he had died, so he came boldly to the Presence of his Judge. He thought that he had done all that could be expected of him. Yet his talent was taken from him, and he himself was cast into outer darkness.

They who built their house upon the sand had a false peace; day by day they raised it; beautiful were its proportions; its materials were those great sayings of our Lord which they heard, admired, felt, perhaps thought well of themselves for feeling—but did not. Beautiful was it, till the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon it, and it fell. Our Lord seems to look upon it with sorrow, as He did on Jerusalem, when He wept over it. It had so much good; aspirations, sympathy, feelings, sense of good, but in vain;

[k] St. Matt. xxv. 25.

for it fell; and our Lord adds so mournfully, '[l] and great was the fall of it.'

They had false peace, who, in the prophet's time, '[m] seek Me daily,' God says, 'and delight to know My ways,'—'they take delight in approaching to God;' who came to enquire of God, having set up their idols in their heart, and were the more deceived, because they so enquired: who, '[n] with their mouth, shewed much love, but their heart went after their covetousness;' to whom that prophet, with his words of fire, was like 'a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument: for they heard his words, and did them not.'

Or they, who for a time were willing to rejoice in the light of that '[o] burning and shining light,' the strict preacher of repentance, St. John Baptist; or who heard the words of our Lord Himself with joy, and dured for a while, but bye and bye were offended: who were very attentive to hear our Lord, so that the Chief Priests, who sought to destroy Him, could not find what they might do[p], yet anon were stirred up to cry, 'Crucify Him.'

Nay, it would seem as if all the lost will have had a false peace; for they profess their ignorance of ever having been hard-hearted to our Lord. They cry out with amazement, and again appeal to Himself against His sentence, '[q] When saw we Thee an hungred or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison.

[l] St. Matt. vii. 27.
[m] Isa. lviii. 2.
[n] Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.
[o] St. John v. 35.
[p] St. Luke xix. 47, 48.
[q] St. Matt. xxv. 44.

and did not minister unto Thee?' Yet it availed them not. 'These,' our Lord says, '[r]shall go away into everlasting punishment.'

But since in the Great Day, so much peace will, too late, be found to be 'false,' how shall we, while there is time, distinguish the true from the false? These are *some* marks.

True peace is the gift of God, false peace is of man's own making. True peace is given by God amid the thought of God, obedience to God, the continual knowledge of the Presence of God, the unceasing worship of God, the friendship of God. False peace is in the forgetfulness of God.

True peace is deepened, not disturbed, by all God's merciful checks, chastisements, the sorrows and disquietudes of the world. False peace eludes, escapes, forgets them, unless in God's mercy it is shivered by them.

True peace is in exact conformity to the will of God; nothing comes amiss, because all comes from the Good Father, sending all good, overruling all evil. '[s]Thou in very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled.' False peace becomes discontented with every thing which is against its own will; murmurs, repines, replaces its griefs with fresh sources of grief.

True peace has no wants; all comes alike to it; it most fears unbroken prosperity (if there be such a thing in this world), lest it should have its portion in it: it pines only for its God. False peace has its home in prosperity; is anxious to increase or to keep

[r] St. Matt. xxv. 46. [s] Ps. cxix. 75.

it, frets after what it has not; is discontented with what it has; restless, covetous.

True peace is in humility, and amid a low estimate of itself. False peace is amid self-complacency. True peace, with St. Paul, is in forgetfulness of the things which are behind and stretching forth to the things which are before, pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' False peace is continually looking back, hugging itself for any good it ever did or thinks that it did.

True peace is firm trust in the overwhelming Infinite love of Jesus for us, His poor sinners: false peace shrinks from the thought of Jesus, as in a personal relation to them. For that thought of a personal relation would bring with it the thought of His being their Example, Whose life they must copy; their Master, Whose commands they must set themselves to obey, not the one or other according to their liking, but all; their Judge, Whose heart-searching Eye is ever upon them, keeping account against the Day of account; and all these are very exacting relations, inconsistent with all the conditions of false peace.

But since true peace is the gift of God, can we in any way gain it, can we set ourselves in the way of having it? Surely. We can, by God's grace, dispose ourselves for receiving it from Him. The first essential condition, plainly, is to cut off any deadly sin, if we have unhappily admitted it. 'There is no peace,

[t] Phil. iii. 14.

saith my God, unto the wicked.' God proclaimeth '[u] peace, peace to the far off and to the near, and I will heal him.' But His holiness requires Him to add, 'But the wicked are like a troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' All man's passions are a trouble to him, until they are, by God's grace, subdued. For by reason of his better nature, he is at war with himself. 'I see what is best and approve it,' said a heathen sensualist [x], 'I follow what is worse.' Apart from the trouble, which God mercifully sprinkles over them, he must be distressed, because he is self-condemned. True peace is in union with God, '[y] Your iniquities,' God says, 'have been abidingly separating between you and your God.'

Therefore Scripture boldly bids you, '[z] Befriend yourself with God, and be at peace.' Let Him be thy Companion, with Whom thou dost hold familiar intercourse, thy Friend. Accustom yourself to His Ways, His Thoughts; make His Ways your ways, His Thoughts your thoughts. Could you have better or wiser than His, Who is Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Love? His law is the transcript of a portion of His eternal Mind. '[a] Great peace have they who love Thy law,' said one who knew from experience, as well as from God's teaching, what he was saying. The ways of Divine Wisdom, said he who above all sons

[u] Isa. lvii. 19–21.

[x] Ovid, Met. vii. 19. See other like complaints in Wetstein on Rom. vii. 15.

[y] Isa. lix. 2. [z] Job. xxii. 21. [a] Ps. cxix. 165.

of men had tried human wisdom; whose name is, throughout the East, still a proverb for wisdom: '[b] Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'

Then, cherish thankfulness with prayer. St. Paul gives us in two words this secret of peace: '[c] In everything (he excepts nothing, so do not you) by prayer and supplication with *thanksgiving* let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding *shall* keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' He does not say it (as we have learned) as a benediction only: he tells us, it '*shall* keep your hearts and minds.' Do the one and God will do the other. Ask what you will, be thankful; and not peace only, but peace which passeth all which our poor minds can think, shall keep these poor breaking restless hearts—these ever wearying worrying minds of ours—in Christ Jesus.

For this is the sum of it. He was fore-announced as the Prince of Peace, and not of peace only, but of an ever-enlarging, ever-widening, deepening peace, without bound, without measure; '[d] of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end.' This the Angels came to announce at His Birth, '[e] Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.' This was His mission to give us '[f] knowledge of salvation by the remission of our sins, to give light to us who sat in darkness, and to guide our feet in the way

[b] Prov. iii. 17. [c] Phil. iv. 6, 7. [d] Isa. ix. 7.
[e] St. Luke ii. 14. [f] Ib. i. 77.

of peace.' This was His bequest, just on His way to purchase it for us, '[g] Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' This He gave on the day of His Resurrection: this He renewed to-day: '[h] Jesus came and stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you.' And now for these well-nigh eighteen centuries and a half, He has kept His word to each individual soul of man, all those millions of souls, one by one, in each successive generation of our race, which has trusted in Him. No one soul hath He ever failed: He will not fail *thee*. Would our poor hearts have more? Yes; there is more, I might say, infinitely more. For peace is no mere gift of God, without us; not even any created grace or rest within us. Our peace is, Christ Himself; 'He,' God says by St. Paul, '[i] He is our peace,' indwelling us by His Spirit. For '[k] the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy (and) peace;' '[l] the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Peace, it may be, must be, imperfect here, because we are imperfect; yet peace on the way to be perfected in Him Who is perfect, yea Infinite Perfection. '[m] For our peace shall then be perfect, when, our whole nature cleaving inseparably to its Creator, nothing from us shall be at variance with us.'

O weary not yourselves any more (if you have been doing so) in seeking peace in the world, where it

[g] St. John xiv. 27. [h] Ib. xx. 26. [i] Eph. ii. 14.
[k] Gal. v. 22. [l] Rom. xiv. 17.
[m] S. Aug de contin. n. 17. Opp. vi. 306. Short Treatises, p. 257. Oxf. Tr.

cannot be found: seek it where it *is*, where God has placed it, in Himself; and He has pledged His Truth to you, 'ye shall find.' '[n] In Me ye shall have peace;' in Him, in Whose '[o] Presence is the fulness of satisfying joy; at Whose Right Hand there are pleasures for evermore.'

[n] St. John xvi. 33.

[o] Ps. xvi. 11.

SERMON XIX.

DO ALL TO THE LORD JESUS.

Col. iii. 17.

'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.'

All, probably, have felt at times a painful void after they had been wholly taken up with some work of their calling or active duty. The soul has seemed to come to itself, and found itself empty and exhausted. What it has done, it has, according to its infirmity, done according to the Will of God. At least, it does not, on examining itself, find anything, in any marked way, done contrary to the Law and Will of God. On the contrary, it has even been employed in His Service; it set out, perhaps, with some brief prayer that it might do it as God willed, or that God might be thereby glorified; at least, at the outset of the day, it commended all its works to God, that they 'might be ordered by His Governance to do always that is righteous in His Sight;' and yet, its work over, all which it has done often seems one great void. It has

not, perhaps, laboured in vain; it has done what was given it to do; its work may have been for the good of man, or for the Glory of God; and yet, when all is over, and others think perhaps that it has done well, it sinks within itself, unsatisfied with itself, lonely in its inmost self, as though it had been all the while without God.

Some of you, my brethren, must doubtless have known, at times, this state; how, at the first moment when, after a busy day spent amid employment in duty with others, ye stood alone with God, all the past seemed one empty turmoil; the soul seemed to have been dead, and now to have a faint sickly life; it seemed to have been away from God, and the whole day, since it last prayed to Him, seems to have been lost; one busy emptiness, because God was not in it. Where was the evil in this? where is the remedy?

The evil is, that we are slow to learn in act what in our inmost souls we know, and in our faith profess, which to doubt were heresy; that we can do nothing good without God. This we know so well, we can confess it so truly and heartily, that we often in deeds the more neglect it. We take it for granted that, since we know it, we shall act on what we know; and because we do so take it for granted, we are unwatchful and as certainly forget it. Nothing is done without effort, until it be learned perfectly, and, whether by nature in the things of nature, or by Grace in the things of Grace, has become part of ourselves. And so if we think that, as a matter of

course, we shall do it, we do it not. Men confess truly, that without God they cannot think one good thought, say one good word, do one good act. They confess that for their bodily life, every function of the body, every breath they breathe, every beating of the heart, they depend upon God Alone. 'When Thou takest away their breath, they die.' And yet they do both in a mechanical way, owning both as truths, yet acting as if nothing were less true. Men think it very unlikely they shall die this day, or that they shall fall into any evil accident, because they have lived so many without any great accidents; and they take it for granted that their food will nourish them, because it has nourished them heretofore; or that they will sleep or wake because they have mostly slept and waked soundly. Yet how could any one be said to depend really upon God at all, who should lie down to sleep with a formal prayer to Him to protect him, yet all the while scarcely thinking but that He will without any prayer at all; or who takes his food as a matter of course, perhaps with some formal grace, yet only thinking perhaps of what is pleasant or nourishing, and how to choose what is most nourishing, as though it must, in itself, nourish him, because God has given it the power so to do? This were more the way of a heathen, than of one who really believes in the special Providence of God.

In like way as to deeds of Grace. It is well, as people's devotions now are, if many, who would wish to account themselves Christians, *really* prayed, morning by morning, to God, to carry them through

the temptations and trials of the day, as really believing that for this they needed the *special* aid of God. For what must one think of very many so-called Christians? Will not very many, who are now Christians, confess it perhaps of many of their younger years, that, if they prayed at all or thought at all, they hoped that they should somehow do right or escape what was very wrong, almost through the very wish and intention of doing or not doing it, that it is enough to call upon God in some general way, and that then (they think not how) things will not be much amiss with them. God is indeed more ready to hear than we to pray; but where has He told us that He will hear such prayers as these? It is to be feared that deeds, done amid such prayers as these, are deeds of nature, not deeds of Grace; deeds such as a good heathen might have done, many not so good as many heathen deeds, being done with perhaps as little thought of the Grace of Christ as those of the heathen. It will seem a hard word; but which are such deeds most like, the acts of men without God, not blasphemers or atheists, yet with as little thought of God as they, or deeds wrought in Christ? Take any of the words of Holy Scripture as to Christian duty or Christian life. 'Pray without ceasing: in everything give thanks.' 'Giving thanks always for all things.' 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord.' 'The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.' 'Whether we live, we live unto the Lord.' 'We

live in the Spirit.' 'If we be dead with Christ.' 'Whether ye eat, or whether ye drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' 'Thou hast wrought all our deeds in us.' 'He that doeth good cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought *in* God.' What words are these! What a light of inward life streams forth through them! what a power of the Spirit! what might of holiness! 'Deeds wrought *in* God,' done heartily to the Lord, eating to the glory of God, a life in the Spirit, Christ liveth *in* me! How many, were they forced to make the choice, must not rather fear that their works were rather wrought without Christ, than dare to claim such words as these.

Or take Christians again in their daily trials. We know how difficult it is not to offend in word, that such an one, the Apostle says, 'is a perfect man.' Yet people converse together on perilous subjects, public evils, the ills of the Church, the measures of those in authority, their spiritual rulers, controversy, holy things, their neighbours, notorious sins, parties to whom they are opposed or who are opposed to their belief, or persons uncongenial to themselves, or who have vexed them, or done them a spite or an injury:—and who, almost, thinks that it must be a great Grace of God to speak on those subjects without displeasing Him by pride, or censorious, or unloving, or irreverent thoughts or words? Of how many conversations, every moment, throughout the Christian world, for how few is any aid of God at all asked, in how far fewer is there any abiding

thought of God, and prayer that He will give good thoughts or keep the tongue from evil words?

It would seem strange to say that most Christians seem to think that in the daily deeds and words of life, they either '*cannot* sin' or they '*must* sin,' or that these two, 'cannot sin' and 'must sin,' are one and the same thing. What people do hate is, being in earnest at all, having any strife with themselves, to keep watch over themselves, to refrain from anything which they wish to do. And so they do not wish to pray for the Grace of God, because they do not wish to be at the pains to use it; they shrink from the pain of putting restraint upon themselves; and so they are ready to think that they cannot help themselves, that they *must* fall into these daily sins of infirmity, and thus they cast back their own faults upon God; or they look upon them as, after all, no such great faults at all, and so they act as though they could not sin. They think that they cannot but sin, and so that it is no sin in *them*.

Or take the same man day by day. It requires very little self-knowledge to know that we have, each of us, besetting sins, sins, as to which our special trial lies. Yet apart from those who almost think it an excuse that it *is* their besetting trial, and so, that they must fail, and take their daily sins almost as a matter of course; who, almost, learns from experience, at least in these, at the moment, by some brief prayer to ask for the grace of God? The sinful, angry, self-pleasing, self-praising, word

again and again escapes, and the thought of God, at best, but follows it.

Such are among the best cases of persons who think that they have religion enough, of whom the world thinks well; of some too, who think even ill of themselves, and would desire to remedy the evil, but know not how.

The Apostle gives the remedy: 'Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.' 'In the Name of the Lord Jesus,' i. e. as one who beareth His Name, in the might of His Name, calling upon His Name, to the Glory of His Great Name; or, in few words, refer all things to Him, receive all from Him. Let Him be the Beginning of all, He the End of all, He the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Beginning from Whom all flows, the End, in Whom we are gathered, the Aim of all we do, the Reward for which we look, for all which, through Him, is wrought to Him; He, the Fountain of all Goodness, from Whom all Graces flow, the Ocean to Whom all should flow back, receiving the streams of our thanksgivings, not to be filled by them, but to supply them again to us.

Have Him before thee as the Pattern Whom thou art to copy, the Redeemer in Whom is thy strength, the Master and Friend Whom thou art to serve and please, thy God by Whom thou hast been created and re-created, and Who, in His Infinite Love, is thine Everlasting Reward. Fix thine eye on Him, as thy Help, thy Aim, the Centre of thy being, that He Who

hath looked on thee that thou mayest see Him, may rivet thee unto Himself, steady thy unsteadfastness, set His Eye on thee, to guide thee.

Set Him before thee, to do all these acts to Him. But can, one will say, all such little acts be done to Him? were it almost an indignity to bring such little things in reference to His Great Majesty? One might rather say, Great love shows itself most in little acts. So we ourselves feel it in earthly love. Nothing is too little to be done for one deeply loved. In great acts we may please ourselves, have self-satisfaction, be self-complacent. Nothing but deep, fixed, love, will do unweariedly all little things, not for its own will, but to please whom it loves. Love has the object of love ever in its eye, in its thoughts. It acts spontaneously because it loves; not to show its love, but because it loves and cannot but so act. As the character of the wicked is entire forgetfulness of God, 'not' to have 'God in all his thoughts,' so 'I have set God always before me,' are the Psalmist's words of Him Who saw no corruption, because He was the Holy One of God. Little things are the very instances of acceptable service given by Holy Scripture. It saith not, 'Give your bodies to be burned for the Glory of God,' nor does it say to all 'Sell that thou hast, and give alms to the Glory of God,' but it takes the very least, every-day things. 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.' It excepts nothing, 'do all'; it instances only the very least things, things which all must do almost every day, what our Lord includes

under 'daily bread,' that so we may stop at nothing short of all, but our whole being, doing, thinking, willing, longing, having, loving, may be wrapt up, gathered, concentrated, in the One Will and Good Pleasure of our God.

Does any, again, ask, How can such little things be done to God? Do them as thou wouldest do them if thou sawest Christ by thee. Do them to the end for which God appoints them. Do them with prayer to Him that thou mayest do them aright, that He would sanctify them and thee. He eats and drinks to the Glory of God, who eats and drinks not for the pleasure of the body, but that he may have strength to do the works of his calling, in the state of life to which God has called him,—who giveth God thanks. He sleeps to the Glory of God, who lieth down to rest in Christ, hoping to wake also with thoughts of Christ, to labour to His honour and service. He drinks wine or strong drink to the Glory of God, who takes it as St. Paul exhorts St. Timothy, with thankfulness, as medicine for his often infirmities. He beholds nature, sea, sky, light, moon, in their beauty, who through the things which are seen glorifies the Creator, the Giver of all, and joins in that many-voiced hymn of praise, wherewith 'all Thy Works praise Thee, O God.' He does his daily task, reaps, or feeds cattle, or ploughs, or studies, to the Glory of God, who plies it under the Eye of God, and doth things or doth them not, as and how he thinks God would have them done or left undone. She sweeps a room to the Glory of God, who does it with

cheerful heart as it should be, because God wills it; and prays in secret, or thinks with what great love Eternal Wisdom swept the house diligently, until she found that piece of silver, even ourselves, who once bore the Image of God. He repents to the Glory of God, who, owning himself vile and defiled, gives Glory to God, and wishes, for love of Him, all undone which was ever done against His Glory and His will. He loves to the Glory of God, who loves God above all things and all besides in and for Him, and as He wills, and nothing out of Him. In the words of an ancient Bishop of the Church[a] on the words of St. Paul, 'When thou sittest to table, pray: when thou eatest bread, give thanks: when thou drinkest wine, remember Him Who gave it thee to make thee of a cheerful heart, and a comfort of thine infirmities. When thou dost put on thy raiment, give thanks to the Good Giver. Dost thou look up to heaven, and the beauty of the stars, bow thyself before God, and worship Him Who in Wisdom made them all. In like way, at sunrise or sunset, in watch or in sleep, give thanks to God, Who created and ordered all these things for thy benefit, that thou mayest own, love, praise the Creator.'

But again, one will ask, How can I do both at once without distraction? How could I do this or that work,—make, for instance, a furrow straight, reap, fish, study, speak, or do anything, and think of God at the same time? Shall I not do my work more care-

[a] St. Basil, Hom. in St. Julitt. Mart.

lessly? Be thine own judge. Hast thou ever deeply loved parent, or bride, or husband, or child? Hast thou toiled for them out of love for them? And didst thou find that thou toiledst less diligently, because thou toiledst for one out of thyself? Or hast thou done anything for man's praise, feeling that an eye, whose praise thou prizedst, was upon thee; that it saw thy every motion, read thy heart through them, gleamed gladly when thou didst well, filled fuller with all hope of thee, quivered with joy at any good in thee? Are these hindrances, or goads and spurs to exert thyself? Hast thou not felt every nerve quickened; a strength, skill, power, glow, daring, quickness, readiness, not thine own, bearing thee on, thou knewest not how, because one thou didst love with a pure love marked thy bearing, and thrilled with thy well-doing? What are we, brethren? where are we? Who is it that is looking upon us, but He our Father, Who loves us with more than mother's love,—our Friend, our Brother, Who was not ashamed to call us brethren; our Redeemer, our Lord, our God, our Everlasting Joy? Who but He Who for us came down from Heaven, for us suffered hunger, thirst, weariness, shame, pain; Who watched, fasted, was, as was read to-day, bound, led away, buffeted, denied, despised; yea, mocked, spit upon, racked upon the Cross, pierced with thorns and nails, for love of us? He it is Who rejoiceth in His faithful servants, fighteth and conquereth in them, as well in their daily strife as in the Martyr's death. He is present, not to look on only, but to aid, to give the victory

which He crowneth; yea, in us, His members, as our Head, to overcome the world, as for us He overcame it; in us to receive the crown of glory which He bestoweth, as for us He wore the crown of thorns, the sins with which we crowned Him. He it is Who looketh on our daily conquest over self; He it is Who checks in us each rude ungentle word by His sweet calming Spirit; He upholds our faintness, supports us when faltering, guides us by His Eye, melts our coldness with His look of love, rejoiceth when in us He seeth of the travail of His Soul. And shall, then, such love not quicken us to do all things better? Does it not give us strength in self-denial to take up our cross after Jesus? Is it not gladness in alms-giving to give to Jesus? Does it not cast a holy reverence around a sick room, that in it we minister to Jesus? Is it not sweet in teaching children, that in them we receive Jesus? Is it not victory over Satan, to do anything in the 'Name of Jesus,' at which devils tremble, hell quakes, Cherubim and Seraphim bow in adoring love, His redeemed thrill with loving amazement, that He being All-Good, so loved us, being all-evil? No! Light is shed all around thee, and thou seest all things in the light; without the light thou couldest not see them; thou seest the light with them, sometimes filling them, gladdening them, sparkling in them, reflected by them; from it they have their glory, and gladness, and beauty, and serenity, and the soft, calm, cheering look, wherewith they seem to lift themselves up in glad joy, to praise Him Who dwelleth in Light Inapproachable. So, be

sure, when thou hast learnt to see all things in Jesus, they will but become to thee more pure, more innocent, more holy, more Divine, more full of transporting joy. When thou hast learnt to do all things to Jesus, it will but shed pleasure over all dull things, softness over all hard things, peace over all trial, and woe, and suspense. It will make contradiction sweet, to bear it meekly with Jesus; poverty honourable, to be poor with Jesus. It will but gladden toil, to labour for Jesus, and sweet will be repose, which rests safe on the Breast of Jesus. Then will life be glad, when thou livest to Jesus: and how sweet death, to die in Jesus: with Him, and to Him, and in Him, to live for evermore.

What! shall love and hatred, jealousy, rivalry, revenge, quicken people's understanding, and give them new skill, abilities, power, strength? Shall even passion, for the time, give an angered man a strength not his own, or 'fear' (as it is said) 'give wings,' so that people have been carried on they knew not how or whither, and done what it seemed they could not do? Shall people, even in bodily games, be strung up, their eye be quickened, their feet be swifter, their strength greater through interest of those who stand by? And shall it be nothing to the Christian that Jesus is ever looking on, ever watching His soldiers in their battle?—that His approving Eye, once for thee dimmed in Blood and Death and parting Agony upon the Cross, now in Divine glory, and beaming with the love of His Godhead, in every deed of thine done for Him, rests on

thee in Good-pleasure and in Love? What have we Christians to do with doing things for the praise of man or for a fleeting breath, when we may do them 'in the Name of Jesus,' for the love of Jesus?

But, once more, it will be asked, how can we learn this? It would, indeed, be sweet that Jesus should be, Unseen, our Companion in all we do; that He should fill our thoughts, not taking away any other needful or happy thought, but, as thou sayest, making them holy, and pure, and calm, and good, and happier far. But we become eager in all we do, our thoughts are taken up with it: we begin the day with some thought of Jesus, and then care follows care, and things of sense take us up, and those around us carry our thoughts away; and so we are hurried on until the end of the day, and, too late, at night, we find that we have been living to ourselves, not with Jesus. This is the very state which I spoke of at first, and for which this rule of the Apostle is the remedy; to 'do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus.' But, it is true, to know that we ought to do anything, is not yet to *know* how to do it; nor is even to *know* how it should be done, the same as *having learned* how to do it, or doing it.

We have to learn divine things also by doing them: and, as *ye* know who have ever learned anything, it is amid many mistakes, and failures, and often forgetfulness, and missing, that we learn; and when we have learned what we have to do, we are still apt again and again to forget it, when it is to be done. So it is in Divine things. There is no easy, toilless

path to Heaven. We have, indeed, a Divine Teacher, Who will teach us all things needful for us, if we will hearken. But *we* are full of weakness: and we must not be impatient with ourselves, if we find ourselves 'slow of heart' in learning to do what we would. Pray for perseverance; seek to learn daily; examine how far thou hast learned it, wherein thou hast forgotten, and God will day by day teach you more and more. To 'do all things in the Name of Jesus' is the lesson of a life; be not angry with yourselves, nor despair of ever learning it, because thou art slow to learn the first few syllables. In Divine things the first steps are the most difficult. God proves us by this difficulty, whether our hearts are in earnest with Him or no. These overpast, what seemed difficult becomes smooth, for He Himself smoothes it, when He has proved us faithful. Yet it may help some of you to have a few simple rules to begin this practice.

1. Morning by morning think, for a few moments, of the chief employments of the day, any one thing of greater moment than others, thine own especial trial, any occasions of it which are likely to come that day, and, by one short strong act, commend thyself beforehand in all to God; offer all thy thoughts, words, and deeds to Him—to be governed, guided, accepted by Him,—through and united with the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Learn to have some set time or set occasions between the morning and evening, which may remind thee of God: for if thou comest again and

again into the presence of thy God, thou wilt not at other times so readily lose the sense of That Presence To this end, the Church of old fixed certain hours for prayer, especially those of the Mysteries of our Redemption, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, at 9,—the Crucifixion, at 12,—our Lord's giving up His Spirit and His Atoning Death, at 3,—for hours of prayer. And in these our own days, people, according to their leisure, have taken some few minutes about the same hours, to think of their Redeemer's Love, and pray to Him. It would hinder no work (however busy any might be) to use the Lord's Prayer in thought of His exceeding love. These are so many stages to help on the soul through the day in thought of God.

3. Choose some great occasions of the day, such as bring with them most trial to thee, on which, above others, to commend thyself to God. So others have made use of outward things. The sights which they see, or sounds they hear, recall to them the thought of God Whom they do not see; and to this end, in part doubtless, Holy Scripture tells us a spiritual meaning of so many common things—reaping, fishing, sweeping a room, a barren fruit-tree, pruning fruit-bearing trees,—that all things may call us to the thought and love of God.

4. When thou hast done this at the beginning of any action, seek to do it again and again while it lasts. Thus, having said grace, *i. e.* given thanks at the beginning of taking food, try to do it also now and then while taking it. Give thanks inwardly, not at thy chief meal only, but at all times that thou takest

food. Or if thou knowest any chief temptation to *thee*—as some conversation with others, some trial of temper, pray, not only at the beginning, but as thou canst from time to time in the course of it.

5. Whatever thy most besetting fault is, observe narrowly the occasions of it. The more thou watchest, the more thou wilt see of them. And these will be as so many outguards and sentinels to thee, to set thyself in order, and pray before the enemy comes. Thus, if thy fault be a quick temper, there are mostly some feelings of discomfort before the angry word escapes; pause to pray a brief prayer, and thy anger will have been stilled or lessened.

6. It is good to have some brief words of a Psalm, some thought of Prayer, which thou mayest use at any moment of leisure. Ye would often have prayed, had ye known what to pray; while ye have been thinking what to pray, the time was gone.

7. Remind thyself from time to time of the Presence of God. Do not think it a stiff formal way. Thou hast not yet learned to live in His Presence, like the holy Angels; and until thou hast learned it, thou must use ways of learning it. God will teach it thee, but not without pains of thine own. It *is* painful, that we should need any help to remind us of Him Who so loves us, Who doth and hath done so great things for us, Who is our All. Yet we are weak, and things of sense take us up, and our only help is to own our weakness, and not to slight any remedy. Our first steps must be feeble, and need outward props: hereafter, by the help of His In-

dwelling Grace, we shall move freely—'walking and leaping, and praising God.'

It must be possible to 'do all things to the Glory of God,' since Holy Scripture expressly so bids us. Be in earnest, think it possible for *thee*, through the Grace of God, and consider earnestly with thyself how thou mayest do it. This is the Christian's life, that all things should be filled with thoughts of God, that all should be done as He wills, all done to Him. He Who fills heaven and earth, vouchsafes to accept as done to His Glory whatever is done according to His Will. The meanest work on earth, done fully according to the Will of God, is done to His Glory, gives joy to the holy Angels, and is accepted by thy Redeemer and thy God, Who gives thee strength to do it. Nay, ye who are poorer have, more than others, a likeness to our Lord's lot on earth. If ye labour with your hands, so did He Who was 'a Carpenter'; if ye have spare food, so had He; if ye have poor dwellings, He had not where to lay His Sacred Head; if ye are often wearied, so was He; if ye are little accounted of, so was He. Your outward lot is like His; seek ye, amid that lot, to conform your mind to His; to bear all things, by His Divine Help, with His Patience; to do things one by one, as He wills; to have been sanctified by being united with His; and common-place every-day earthly toils will win you Heavenly Rewards, through His Merits Who purchased for us both Grace and Glory, both the power to do His Will and the will to will it, and the strength to persevere to the end. Toil here, not for

your families only, not for your daily bread (although this, too, is right), but because it is the Will of God, and as He wills, and to please Him, and while in 'the sweat of your brows ye eat bread,' your daily toils shall be pearls in your heavenly Crown, which He your Merciful Judge will give you in that Day, and to all them who love His Appearing; and the pearls of that Crown are no created beauty, but the Beauty of the Grace of God, and His Own Glory gleaming in His Saints, and His Divine Love filling them and transporting them with love and joy unutterable wherewith it fills them.

SERMON XX.

THANKSGIVING.

PHIL. iv. 6, 7.

'Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus.'

STRANGE it is, that we, poor creatures that we are and miserable, should have any thing to give to Almighty God. What can we give, my brethren? Thanks. A cheap, easy, costless thing, you will think. We think nothing whatever if, fifty times in the day or oftener, we were to say 'Thank you' for any little service which any neighbour or friend or dependent should do to us. It is said so easily, that it does not cost us a thought to do it. We do it as a matter of course, by a sort of instinct. We should be shocked, and think that we had been forgetful of courtesy and kindly feeling, if we happened to forget it. We should fear to have pained whoever had done the little service for us, or lest we should have seemed careless as to his feelings. People will even take trouble to supply the thanks afterwards. Now, in all this, we bear witness

to ourselves, that it is the very feeling of nature itself to thank those who, in things very little as well as great, are kind to us.

But who well-nigh think it necessary to do this to Almighty God? People commonly 'say grace,' as it is called, that is, 'thanks' to God for one of the meals of the day, some for two; and some, I hope, may thank God in the morning for their sleep and its refreshment; and perhaps in the evening too, for keeping them from any evil. And well is it, whoever has the habit of doing this; and the more he does it from his heart, the more pleasing he will be to God.

Yet are then food and sleep all the good things God gives us or does for us? God so surrounds us with goods, that men think the less of them, because God always gives them. If God only gave us now and then, what He gives us daily, hourly, we should be out of ourselves for wondering awe at His goodness. Miracles they are of His goodness and His power and love; not less miracles than those which we read of, when He divided the sea for His people to pass over, or when He fed them from heaven, or gave them water from the rock. Nay, they are the more wondrous, because God bringeth them about so marvellously, doing all Himself, yet letting us, here too, work together with Him. One and the same Power is it, whether God gives us our food or our drink and our clothing, and warms us, gladdens our eyes with the sun's glorious light, gives us power to see, supplies us, wherever we go, with air to breathe, and gives us without pain and effort power to breathe it;—one and the same wonder-

ful power and goodness and love is it, as if He ever gave these things to each of us in some new way. Nay, it is a very part of His love that some things, as light and sleep and power to breathe and gain strength, He gives us without any effort of our own; some things through toil and labour which He blesses to our souls. In all things He counsels for us; all things which He doth, He doth for us; all things He fitteth for us. All things which we see or know of, would, but for His upholding power, fall again into nothing. In all things He Himself ministers to us. 'a All things serve God,' by serving us. Nay, so to speak, Almighty God Himself serveth us, worketh for us, as our Lord says, 'bMy Father worketh hitherto and I work.' He supplies our needs by an ever-present working.

And what then of our health, our strength, our powers of mind and body, our thoughts, our memories, our powers to love, to enjoy? Are these from ourselves, or does God give them to us once for all, to hold as our own, to boast of as our own, to be lords of, and to hold them from ourselves? Every power is upheld in us at every moment by God. We remember things or do not remember them; we think or can not think; the thoughts flash into our souls, or they are dry and barren, as God gives or, for our good, suspends them or withdraws them. Those who have watched their own powers of thought, have seen how they came, they went; they gleamed on the

[a] Ps. cxix. 91. [b] St. John v. 17.

soul, they vanished. What they toiled after, burst upon them, or they caught a glimpse of it, and it was gone, but left some trace behind. They have seen and felt that, not only had they not their powers from themselves but from God, but the very powers which they had, they had continually supplied to them by God. It is well-known how one, drunken with the pride of his power in shewing that God is what He is, boasted that with the same skill he could shew that He was not, and God withdrew from him at once his powers of mind, and he who had just before been eloquent in speech, clear in reasoning, powerful in understanding, mighty in thought, became a senseless idiot. You know how while the word, '[c] Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty,' was yet in Nebuchadnezzar's mouth, 'there fell a voice from heaven saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee is it spoken, The kingdom is departed from thee.'

And as yet I have said nothing. But yet for these very things a heathen too ought continually to thank God and to praise God. For these things the Jews, before our Lord came, did continually praise God. '[d] I will always give thanks unto the Lord; His praise shall be,' not now and then, but 'continually in my mouth.' '[e] My tongue shall speak of Thy righteousness and Thy praise,' not in set words morning and evening, but 'all the day long.' '[f] O let my mouth,' they say to God, 'be filled with Thy praise, that I may sing of

[c] Dan. iv. 30, 31.
[d] Ps. xxxiv. 1.
[e] Ib. xxxv. 28.
[f] Ib. lxxi. 8.

Thy glory and honour all the day long.' It is counted as the special sin of Israel in the wilderness, that, on each fresh mercy of God, '[g] then believed they His words, and sang praises unto Him; but within a while they forgat His words and would not abide His counsel.'

The heathen were without excuse, if they did not praise God, thank God. Nature itself crieth within us, that we owe ourselves, our very being, all that we are, and all that we have, all within us and without us, to Him Who made us, and all things for us, to use and to enjoy. And therefore nature itself crieth aloud within us, that we should love Him wholly, thank Him wholly, to Whom we owe our very being and all which maketh our being a joy to us. To Him we owe our whole mind and heart and soul and strength; therefore with our whole mind and heart and soul and strength which we owe to Him, we should praise Him. '[h] When shall we cease to praise Him? When we cease to have from Him, for which to praise Him. And since He always blesses us, we must evermore bless Him, and His praise be ever in our mouth.' 'What better,' says a father[i], 'can we have in our hearts, and utter with our mouth than thanks be to God? Nothing can be said more briefly, or heard more gladly, understood more grandly, or done more fruitfully. Whence Christians were even mocked[k] by scoffers, because they so often said, when they met one another, "Thanks be to God."'

[g] Ps. cvi. 12, 13. [h] St. Bernard. [i] St. Aug. Ep. ad Aurelium.
[k] Id. in. Ps. 133, [132, Lat.] n. 6, iv. 115. Oxf. Tr.

And yet if such should be the thanks of mere nature, what should be the thanks of grace! If such be the thanks due that we are, that we live, that we behold heaven and earth, have mind and reason, memory and free-will, what, that we may live to God, that earth is for us, and heaven is ours, this fair earth is but a sojourning-place, where to gain heaven? What, when every thing beautiful in it, every thing which in it we love, is but a picture of some higher beauty and loveliness and love, in store for us if we love God? What, when not heaven alone or earth is ours, but the Father of heaven and earth, God Himself is ours, to be our own God, if we will, for ever and ever?

And should we the less love God for this, and praise God for all this, because they are so common, because so many besides us have them? Nay, rather, we should the more bless God, and praise God, because so many besides us have them. In that ocean of joy, which there shall be in the world to come, we shall have the more joy, because so many whom we shall love, shall have the same or greater joy. Is it not a joy to us here, with the little love which we have, to see others whom we love, have the same joy as ourselves? Does it not so increase our joy, if we deeply love, that we then begin deeply to joy, when those whom our inmost hearts love, share our joy? And there, in heaven, we shall all so deeply love, that our deepest love here will be but a shadow of the lowest love there; and we shall love all, and so shall share the joy of all there with

a more inward joy than here we share the joy of those whose joy is as our own.

Yet God meets that other craving of our hearts too, to have a love which shall be our very own. As every blade of grass is different from another, so, and much more, is soul from soul. God, in all eternity, thought of us all in His Infinite Mind; He beheld us one by one, such as, in His goodness, He willed to make us. When there were none but Himself, Father Son and Holy Ghost, He saw and knew every one of us, and loved us with an Infinite love. In His own Infinite Eternity of All-perfect Being, He evermore beheld each one of us; in that Eternity, which was before He created each of you, He beheld you in love. In love, He willed to create you, preserve you, guard you from evil, endow you with gifts of mind and body, redeem *you* with the most precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, make *you* a member of Christ, His own Son; justify you, dwell in you by His Spirit, unite you to Himself; recall you, if you have gone astray from Him. Day by day, He willed to guard you, guide you, put His own thoughts into you, cherish you, warn you, speak to you in His word or by His preacher or by your conscience, bring His Word home to your soul, comfort you, refresh you, enlighten you, strengthen you. In the day of Judgment, which shall reveal the secrets of all hearts, and which will reveal us fully to ourselves and God's ways to us, we shall see how specially cared for we have been; how, had there been in the whole creation none but us, God

could not have done more for us, than He has done for us. We have a sort of instinct of this. For although many would exchange their outward lot with others, few would wish to exchange themselves. They would, if they could, have this or that gift of nature or of grace; they would be what others have become, by using the grace of God. But few, I believe, of those who will be saved at last, would wish to be another instead of themselves. For they are what God made them; they are what God loves.

But since this is so, my brethren, what a loss it is of peace, of rest, of love, of grace, not continually to thank God for all His goodness and love to us.

Thanklessness hinders our prayers from being heard. Thankfulness opens heaven, that God rain down fresh grace upon us, give us what our hearts desire. Therefore God bids us by the Apostle 'be careful,' i.e. anxious, 'about nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God shall rule in your hearts.' See how largely He speaks. He would tell us, 'In no one thing need you be anxious, so that in that thing you with faithful hearts pray to God.' You see how the nothing and the every thing stand over against one another. In every thing we may pray to God, and so in nothing need we be anxious, because we tell *Him* our anxieties, Who loves us and cares for us more than we for ourselves. But why then with thanksgiving? Why is thanksgiving so needful to our prayer being heard? This you may

ask, nay doubtless have asked it. 'We see the need to ask of God what we would have. It is right, of course, to thank Him when He gives us what we ask Him, but why are we to thank Him beforehand as it were? Why is thanksgiving to go along with our prayer?'

Now I would ask you, what is the end of your praying? That we may have what we want, you will say. True. But what is the great end of your having what you want? What is the end of it all, that God should hear our prayers, give us what we need, turn from us what we fear, but that we should love God, praise God, think of God and of His Goodness? And has not God then heard our prayers already? Has He not given to us countless mercies, secret and open; known and unknown; remembered and forgotten; daily, every-day, tokens of love, and signal, outstanding deeds of His love? with our will or against our will; from our birth unto this hour? There is then no 'thanking God beforehand,' Who daily forecometh us with His benefits. But he would say, Be thankful to God for all His past and present mercies, and so ask, without anxiety and fear, for whatever more you need. For, little prayer as there is to God, there is, I fear less thanksgiving. The ten lepers prayed earnestly, implored, beseeched our Lord to hear them? Humbly, faithfully, devoutly, they cried, '[1] Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us.' Of all it might so far be said, 'their

[1] St. Luke xvii. 13.

faith made them whole.' What then was lacking to the nine, whose thanklessness our Saviour censured? None returned to praise Him save one Samaritan. '[m] There are none returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.' The nine doubtless went their way to the priests, glad to be freed from their loathsome plague, joyed to be restored to their friends. Their hearts doubtless swelled with joy; but they joyed in themselves, not in God. They thought not to return to thank and to own Him Who had healed them. What a picture they are of most of us. They had faith; well is it for us, if we have even their faith; but where is the love of the one Samaritan?

And is it not now continually so? The weather is contrary to us. We cannot sow or reap; or what we sow cannot come up, for lack of rain[n]. And heaven seems shut, so that we have no rain, or the earth is bound with frost, or again unceasing rain threatens our harvest, and at last we pray, and God sends us what we need; and what then? Men joy that they have what they wanted, and there is perhaps a passing thought of God, and they go away to enjoy or busy themselves about what God gives them. But does not our Lord say of us, '[o] Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?'

We are stricken with sickness, and we know not whether it be for life or death. We look anxiously, wishing that we had loved God more or served Him

[m] St. Luke xvii. 13.

[n] Preached in a village church after successive unpromising seasons.

[o] St. Luke xvii. 17.

better in life, unwilling to depart into God's presence, having served ourselves so much, God so little. God restores us; we speak at best, gratefully to our friends, when we are reminded of it. But where are they who give God lasting thanks for His mercy, when received, in proportion to the earnestness with which they desired it? May not our Lord again ask us 'Where are the nine?'

Or we ask for some temporal happiness, which lies very near our hearts, or that God would turn away some temporal evil, at which our soul turns faint; we ask Him like Hannah or like David for his child, with all the earnestness of our souls. In the touching words of Holy Scripture, of Jacob, '[p] our life is bound up in the lad's life.' God hears us, gives what our soul longed for or loved as itself, takes away what the soul dreads far more than itself to depart from life, and, where is the thanksgiving to God, which, in our inmost souls, we thought we should give to God, if He should vouchsafe to hear our prayers? 'Where are the nine?'

Again, we are struck with some sense of sin. God reveals ourselves to ourselves. Affrighted at ourselves, grieved in soul for past sin, fearful for the future, we betake ourselves to God's mercy, own ourselves, as we are, miserable sinners, implore Him, for Christ's sake, to have mercy upon us and to forgive us. We trust that, for Christ's sake, He has forgiven us. But who well-nigh continues to thank God, as he then thought that we should thank Him?

[p] Gen. xliv. 30.

Who well-nigh remembers from what a depth of misery and of Hell God rescued Him? 'Where are the nine?'

Again, in the Sacraments God unites us with Himself. We believe, we know with our minds, that in the Holy Eucharist (i. e. in the great Thanksgiving) we 'spiritually eat the Flesh of Christ and drink His Blood, we dwell in Him and He in us.' People prepare themselves in some measure to receive Him, give some set thanks when they have received Him. But who well-nigh remembers it through the day? Who well-nigh thanks Him again and again even through that one day? Where then are the nine? On this very ground Sacraments often so little profit, because there is so little thankfulness afterwards.

God does hear us again and again, notwithstanding our little thankfulness. He again and again tries to win us to greater thankfulness and love. But whatever we need for soul or body or estate, for ourselves or for those we love, this want of thankfulness for past and present mercies, is the greatest hindrance to our prayers. 'Thanklessness,' says a holy man [q], 'is a parching wind, drying up the fountain of pity, the dew of mercy, the streams of grace.' '[r] It is a destructive thing, an enemy of grace, hostile to salvation. As far as I have any insight, most dear brethren, nothing so displeases God in the sons of grace, the converted, as ingratitude.

[q] St. Bern. in Cant. Serm. 51, n. 6.

[r] In Dom. vi. post Pentec. Serm. 2 de 7 misericordiis.

For it blocks up the way against grace, and where it is, thenceforth grace finds no access, no place. Thinkest thou that to such an one greater grace shall be given, and not rather what he seemeth to have be taken from him? For doth not that rightly seem to be lost which is given to one ungrateful? or may not God repent[s] to have given, what seemeth to be lost? Grateful then and devout must a man be, who longeth that the gift of grace which he hath received should not only abide with him, but be multiplied.'

This then is the secret of true peace, this, of patience in suffering, this gaineth for us what we ask; this opens to us the treasures of God's grace; through this we are heard for others or for ourselves; through this we become the friends of God; by this we draw down His love for us, if in every thing we give thanks. 'In every thing?' Yes, the Apostle says 'in every thing.' '[t] Be grateful for the least thing, and thou shalt be worthy to receive greater.' In what thou seest and knowest, thank heartily; in what thou knowest not, thank blindly. This thou knowest from God Himself, that He is very good in Himself, and very good to those who love Him; this thou knowest in thine own memory, that He has been very good to thee. All thou hast, all thou art, all thou canst do, is from Him and through Him. Every joy which we have had from childhood until

[s] 'Aut dedisse non poenitet, quod periisse videtur?' This may either be a general maxim, or the word 'repent' may be used as in Gen. vi. 6, 7.

[t] De imit. Christi iii. 1

now have been His Gifts. And to whom gave He them? We are the more thankful to men like ourselves, we think it a greater kindness, if those shew us kindness, who are far removed above us in rank or station or intellect or be it what it may. We should think it far more, if one to whom we had done wrong, or been unkind, or ungrateful, were not to reproach us, but to heap fresh kindnesses upon us. And what is God? He Who alone Is. What are we? Well were it if we were only dust and ashes; but we are alas! His rebel ungrateful creatures. If we are a little grateful now, we have been ungrateful heretofore. Yet He was so merciful that He forgave our misdeeds and remembered them not. We each know or ought to know our own hearts, my brethren. We each ought to know wherein we offended Him. And yet in all things in which we offended Him, we were using His gifts against Himself. His were the powers of mind and body, His gift the free will, with which, instead of freely and nobly willing what He willed, we willed and did what He hated. And when we were thus ungrateful to His mercy, His mercy it was that He bore still patiently with us; His mercy, that He suggested or called to us so often to amend; His mercy, that we fell not into worse or more frequent sins; His mercy, that His grace overpowered our resisting will; His mercy, that He gave us repentance; His love, that He forgave us; His goodness, that He has given us power to love Him; His unspeakable tender love for us, miserable sinners, that He willed that we

should be able to love Him, be loved by Him, enter into His love, be filled with His love, for ever and ever. O then let us thank Him for His mercies, 'and forget not all His benefits.' His past mercies are earnests to us of mercies to come. He changes not, except to give us more mercies, as we, through His grace, are changed, and can receive them more. His mercies to us in the past are not past. They are part of His ever-present unchanging love. We do not forget great love done to us by man. Let us thank Him evermore for all His mercies, past, present, and to come; all He has done, all He wills to do for us, all which He wills to be to us, if we will. There is such deep peace and rest in thanking God. You know how it is a rest to the soul, even if it be in silent love, to thank those who love us with more thanks and love than words can utter. Even so does the heart bound towards God, rest in God, in thankful love. Never perhaps is the soul so one with God, as when it thanks Him. When we pray for forgiveness, we have to think of our sins; when we ask for things which God has not yet given us, we look hopefully up to Him. But when we thank God, then, for the time, we long for no more, we are looking out for no more; we rest and find our full contentment in thanking God, and in having been the object of His love. It is a foretaste of eternal rest and peace, to thank God. In thanking God, we have no thought of anything else, but the love of God, because He is so good in Himself and to our poor selves. Our whole life might be one jubilee

of rest and love, if we were ever thanking God. Now too, as we thank God, our hearts expand with love. The more we thank Him, the more we love Him; the soul feels how sweet it is, above all joy, to love Him and to thank Him; and so we love Him more, and thank Him more, and find that one thought of the love of God is more deep placid joy then there is in the whole world besides. For all other joy, deep as the joy of love is, when it is in God, is bounded; but the peace which comes from the love of God and from thanking God, has no bounds. For so God tells us, '[u] In every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, *and* the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and mind through Christ Jesus.' You see, brethren, how God promises that the peace shall come with the thanks. We have not to get this peace for ourselves. Tell God, He bids us, your needs, praying Him, thanking Him, '*and* the peace of God *shall* keep your hearts.' And what peace? '[x] Peace which passeth all understanding.' Peace, which you cannot imagine to yourselves before it comes; peace, which, when it comes, is more than the mind can hold, *shall*, He says, keep, that is, guard your minds from all which could disturb your peace, or draw you away from God; and keep you, where? *in* Christ Jesus, so that cleaving to Him, loving Him, loved by Him, you shall never be separated from Him, but evermore dwell in Him;

[u] Phil. iv. 6, 7. [x] Phil. iv. 7.

and our poor thanks now shall be but the first faint notes of those endless Hallelujahs wherewith we shall evermore thank God, because we shall evermore love God and evermore find in His infinite love, more for which to thank Him and to love Him.

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